GLORIOUS HAWKS
Shaun Burgoyne and Norm Smith medallist Cyril Rioli celebrate with fans after Hawthorn's third consecutive premiership in 2015.
The Seven Network audience for the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final, the second-highest audience for a program on metropolitan television in 2015.

The metropolitan and regional audience which watched the Seven Network’s broadcast of the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Total aggregate audience for the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series on the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel.
6,351,578
TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR THE 2015 TOYOTA AFL PREMIERSHIP SEASON

32,242
The average attendance per game for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the fourth-highest average attendance per game in world professional sports competitions.

836,136
The total number of AFL club members in 2015 – a record established by the clubs for the 15th successive season. One in 28 Australians is a member of an AFL club.

67
HIGHLIGHTS

SHOWING RESPECT
Fremantle breaks through the banner before its Anzac Day game against the Sydney Swans at Domain Stadium.
MAJOR AWARDS

BROWNLOW MEDAL
Nat Fyfe
Fremantle

NORM SMITH MEDAL
Cyril Rioli
Hawthorn

COLEMAN MEDAL
Josh Kennedy
West Coast Eagles

NAB AFL RISING STAR
Jesse Hogan
Melbourne

$245.2 MILLION
The AFL makes various payments and distributions to AFL clubs which in 2015 totalled $245.2 million compared with $218.3 million in 2014.

$220.5 MILLION
The total gross payments to players in 2015, made up of $200.2 million in gross player payments, $18.6 million in additional services agreements and $1.7 million in employment and marketing agreements with associates of clubs. The 2015 total was a 6.6% increase on the 2014 total of $206.8 million.
TOTAL DOMESTIC PARTICIPATION IN THE GAME IN 2015, AN 8% INCREASE ON THE 2014 TOTAL

318,880
TOTAL FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE GAME IN 2015, COMPARED WITH 2014 LEVEL OF 194,966

1,247,575

336,113
The number of participants in community club football throughout Australia in:

13,873 TEAMS
2672 COMMUNITY CLUBS
253 COMMUNITY LEAGUES

182,927
The number of NAB AFL Auskick participants in 2015 in 2936 community centres around Australia, up 2.5% on the 2014 total of 178,522 participants.

GRABBING THE OPPORTUNITY
Tayla Harris kicks a goal during Melbourne’s four point win over the Western Bulldogs in their women’s exhibition match at Etihad Stadium in August.

PHOTO Getty Images
The Melbourne Football Club proudly hosted its former coach on Queen's Birthday Monday when the whole football community rallied to support Neale Daniher and the Big Freeze at the 'G, raising an incredible $2.4 million for the Cure for MND Foundation. Then Prime Minister Tony Abbott joined Daniher as he walked to the MCG among a sea of supporters to see some of the biggest names in the media slide into a freezing ice pool before the game in front of a crowd of more than 65,000. Daniher's campaign included the sale of more than 11,000 blue beanies.
The Melbourne Football Club brought to life the campaign ‘Mums Make The Game’ when they hosted Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) on Mother’s Day weekend in round six. More than 300 mums ran through a specially created pink banner. Five hundred pink lady silhouettes were planted in Yarra Park, paying tribute to those diagnosed with breast cancer.

The MCG turned pink for the first time using the newly installed exterior lighting. More than $80,000 was raised on the night to support the important work BCNA do with women and men who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Melbourne has partnered with BCNA since 2006 when the first ‘Field of Women’ was held at the MCG.
The AFL maintains its position as the pre-eminent sporting code in Australia, delivering positive outcomes for key stakeholders and dealing with fresh challenges.

LASTING LEGACY
Dual Brownlow medallist Chris Judd’s stellar career came to an end in 2015 after suffering a serious knee injury against the Crows at the MCG, but he left an indelible mark at his two clubs Carlton and the West Coast Eagles.
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

MIKE FITZPATRICK
CHAIRMAN

While history was made as Hawthorn won its third successive premiership, the game rallied to support those affected by the tragic death of Phil Walsh.

The 2015 season will be remembered for both historic successes and also the deep sadness at the death of Adelaide Crows senior coach Phil Walsh. Hawthorn enhanced its reputation as the powerhouse of the AFL era by adding the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership to the premierships it had won in 2008, 2013 and 2014.

We congratulate the Hawks who have played in six Grand Finals in the AFL era and also coach Alastair Clarkson, who joined the list of all-time coaching greats to have coached four premierships. I also want to congratulate Fremantle’s Nat Fyfe whose on-field brilliance in winning the 2015 Brownlow Medal was matched only by his humility and humour.

In 2015, we saw significant achievements through attendances, club membership and participation in our game and the continued growth in the number of women playing our game. The introduction of a national AFL women’s competition in 2017 will ensure even greater opportunities for women taking up our game. I want to thank our AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan for a series of changes brought in during 2015 that ensured the fixture, the match-day environment and even the price of food was more focused on providing benefits for all our fans.

We continued to make changes to enhance the look of the game and the on-field safety and wellbeing of players with the AFL Commission approving a further reduction in the number of interchanges for the 2016 season while maintaining a strong focus on the prevention and treatment of injury, particularly concussion.
Last year also saw the AFL secure the largest broadcasting rights agreement for any Australian sporting body in history with the Seven Network, News Corporation and Telstra.

Importantly, the role of the AFL Commission was not just to ensure the competition secured an appropriate broadcasting agreement that provides a strong return for the game and stronger access for supporters, but to decide the funding framework so future investment could be secured. The premiership points were split between Adelaide and Geelong, as per the AFL rules. The remaining seven games proceeded as scheduled but with changed pre and post-match activities, including the observation of a minute’s silence at all games, as a mark of respect to Phil and his family.

I would also like to acknowledge the West Coast Eagles for how they supported the staff, players and families of Adelaide when the club played the Eagles at Domain Stadium in Perth the following week. The Eagles were also deeply impacted by the death of Phil, given his five years as an assistant coach with the club, but they and their supporters could not have done more to support their Adelaide colleagues.

The initiative of Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson and his Collingwood counterpart Nathan Buckley in bringing their players together with arms linked at the end of their game at the MCG on July 3 for a minute’s silence was a fitting tribute repeated not only at other AFL matches during the weekend but also by community clubs around Australia.

A tribute to Phil by leading Adelaide Advertiser journalist Michelangelo Rucci is in this report on page 29.

The AFL competition, in particular the Carlton and Hawthorn Football Clubs, also rallied around Hawks assistant coach and former Blues senior coach and premiership player Brett Ratten after his eldest son Cooper died in a car accident in August.

HISTORIC BROADCAST AGREEMENT

The AFL Commission was delighted to finalise broadcast rights agreements with the Seven Network, News Corporation and Telstra for a six-year period starting in 2017 which are a benchmark for Australian sport. The agreements followed an enormous amount of work over several years by the Executive team with the support from AFL Commissioners Paul Bassat and Kim Williams who joined me on the AFL Commission’s Broadcasting sub-committee.

It was important any agreement ensure the fundamentals for the AFL, including that the AFL continue to have full control of the production of the fixture, including the scheduling of the Toyota AFL Grand Final, and that the Toyota AFL Premiership Season continue to be a 22-match season for each of our clubs, with a standard round of nine matches.

The agreement covers six seasons from 2017-22, and will deliver the AFL a financial return of $2.508 billion.
THE BROADCAST DEAL IN DETAIL

Under the agreement with our broadcast partners, the following arrangements will be in place for the 2017 AFL Premiership season.

The agreements ensure that other than Thursday night matches, public holiday schedules and bye/split rounds, the competition will have:

- 1 Friday night game
- 2 Saturday afternoon games
- 1 Saturday twilight game
- 2 Saturday night games
- 2 Sunday afternoon games
- 1 Sunday twilight game

The AFL agreement with our partners will cover:

- The Seven Network for free-to-air television
- News Limited for subscription television across Foxtel and the Fox Footy Channel
- Telstra for the Live AFL App, AFL.com.au, club digital network and IP TV.

Other key components include:

- Seven Network holds the free-to-air rights, and includes:
  - The Toyota AFL Grand Final
  - The Brownlow Medal
  - The Toyota AFL Finals Series, the Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade and Toyota AFL Season, Toyota AFL Finals Series, Toyota AFL Grand Final
  - The Toyota AFL Premiership Series, for each of the teams whose home grounds will be shown live.
- The Brownlow Medal count exclusively for each team in the premiership season.
- Nine matches each week – every match of every round during the premiership season will be broadcast live.

WHAT THE BROADCASTING AGREEMENT MEANS

In 2015, we started the important work on deciding how to invest the revenue that will be generated by the broadcasting agreement for 2017 and beyond.

The AFL Commission regards this as a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We won’t be spending for the moment; we’ll be investing for generational evolution, generational change and generational needs.

The legacy is not in the agreement itself but in how the broadcast revenue can be put to use in the best long-term interests of the AFL industry. Over the past 10 years, we invested in expansion of our game – a move that has made us stronger and given us a larger national footprint and appeal that is reflected in the price generated for our broadcast rights.

Our focus for the future is clear.

Our investment strategy is based on upholding the key pillars that make up our game – our clubs, our fans, our players and the community.

We have considerable challenges ahead for our sport in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalised environment.

The past 10 years have been about rising to the challenge and increasing our reach into every state, region, town and beyond. Our investment strategy is based on meeting the needs of our game – our clubs, our fans, our players and the community.

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CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

GROWING THE GAME

John Witheriff, who has been instrumental in the Gold Coast Suns establishment and development, has announced he will stand down as chairman after the club’s opening match of the 2016 season.

The 18 clubs that make up the AFL competition drive the popularity of our game and I would like to thank everyone involved with our clubs – board members, staff, players, coaches and volunteers for their fundamental role at the highest level of our game. We congratulate and thank each of you for what you do for Australia’s only indigenous game.

I would like to make particular mention of Gold Coast Suns chairman John Witheriff who announced his retirement from the role in December 2015. John was not a lifelong fan of our game, but has been a lifelong advocate for the Gold Coast and, as a successful local businessman, understood the benefits an AFL club could bring to the community.

He chaired the GC 17 bid group which, after almost two years’ work and the passionate support of the local community, presented a proposal to the AFL Commission that an AFL club be established on the Gold Coast.

He served as a board member for North Melbourne from 1965 but, when he became chairman of North Melbourne, the club transformed under his leadership and while we did not always agree with his position, we recognise the hard work and commitment he displayed to the club during his tenure.

The AFL Commission welcomed the club’s appointment of Lindsay Tanner, a former Federal Finance Minister and long-serving member of the Federal Parliament to replace Paul as chairman. He brings a wealth of experience from government and the private sector and we look forward to working closely with him and his board to lead Essendon back to its place as a strong, competitive powerhouse of the AFL.

The John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award

On Toyota AFL Grand Final Day, we were delighted to announce that Dr Allen Aylett had been selected as the second winner of the John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award.

The John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award is presented periodically to an individual who has made an extraordinary and positive contribution to the AFL competition and/or the game of Australian Football as an administrator, media representative, player, coach or field umpire or any combination thereof. The inaugural winner in 2014 was Lou Richards, given his contribution to the game as a player and premiership captain with Collingwood combined by his career as a newspaper columnist, radio and television broadcaster.

Dr Aylett played 220 games and kicked 311 goals for North Melbourne, captained the club and was a three-time club best and fairest winner. He was one of the initial inductees into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 1996.

After his retirement as a player, Dr Aylett maintained his involvement in football as a writer with the Sporting Globe and panellist on HSV7’s Football Inquest on Saturday nights with media personalities such as Ron Casey and Mike Williamson.

He served as a board member for North Melbourne from 1965 but, when he became chairman of North Melbourne, the club transformed under his leadership to win its first VFL premiership in 1975. At age 36, he was the youngest person to be appointed as president of a VFL club.

Dr Aylett served two terms as chairman of North Melbourne – from 1977-76 and 2001-06.

When he became VFL president in 1977, he was a strong advocate for:

- A national competition
- An independent commission to run the game.

He was VFL president from 1977-84 – he stood down when the first VFL Commission was appointed.

AFL ANNUAL REPORT  2015
At our meeting in February 2016, the AFL Commission accepted the recommendations of the Nominations Sub-Committee to nominate Andrew Newbold and Gabrielle Trainor to the AFL Commission to replace the retiring Chris Langford and Sam Mostyn.

The nominations will be considered by the AFL club presidents/chairs at the Annual General Meeting on March 17, 2016.

I chaired the Nominations Committee which also included AFL Commissioner Richard Goyder, along with the president of the Richmond Football Club, Peggy O’Neal, and the chairman of the Port Adelaide Football Club, David Koch.

Andrew Newbold stepped down from serving as president of the Hawthorn Football Club in January 2016, and has had a very successful commercial career as a lawyer, manager and entrepreneur. Andrew has a deep understanding of the AFL and its role in the Australian social and corporate arenas and extensive experience in the corporate sector.

He is a Director of Bryson Funds Management Pty Ltd, RealAIS and Sports Education Development Australia and was a director of Hawthorn for 13 years and was appointed president in 2002.

During his term as president, the club won three premierships and played in four successive Toyota AFL Grand Finals, had four years of collective club profit and signed off on plans for a new home and development at Dingley.

Gabrielle Trainor is a former lawyer, journalist, public sector executive and consultant in public policy, government relations and issues management. She has more than 20 years’ experience as a non-executive director in entities such as urban development, major projects, transport and infrastructure.

She is a director of two ANZ Banking Group subsidiary boards, of Infrastructure Australia, the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and Clarius Group. She chairs Barnardos Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive and has a number of other appointments, including on the board of trustees of Western Sydney University and Business Events Sydney. She sits on the board of agenda-setting Indigenous organisation Cape York Partnership and chairs the Aurora Education Foundation for Indigenous students.

Gabrielle was appointed as an inaugural director of the Greater Western Sydney Giants F.C. in 2011 and chaired the Giants’ Integrity Committee. She has lifelong experience in football, ranging from volunteering for the Willoughby Wildcats in the Sydney AFL juniors competition to sitting on the AFL Commission NSW/ACT, where she championed the movement to better integrate the Sydney Women’s AFL with the Commission.

Her grandfather, Frank, and father, Tony, were presidents of North Melbourne for a total of 22 years.

Gabrielle and Andrew both bring recent corporate, government and not-for-profit leadership over many years.

I would also like to acknowledge the very long and exemplary service of Sam Mostyn and Chris Langford as AFL Commissioners.

Sam Mostyn was the AFL’s first female Commissioner, joining the AFL Commission in 2005.

Sam has been a strong advocate for the AFL’s Respect and Responsibility policies and Indigenous programs. She has been a driving force in the development of a national women’s league and participation for women and girls playing at all levels of the game, as well as bringing high-level business and corporate knowledge to the role.

She has been a trailblazer in her role.

Her 10 years of commitment to the AFL Commission has made the AFL a better, stronger and more community-minded organisation and she will leave an indelible stamp on our game.

Chris Langford, decorated premiership player and captain of the Hawthorn Football Club, twice All-Australian, AFL Life Member and member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame, and successful businessman, retires after serving more than 15 years with the AFL Commission.

Chris has been a great servant of the game and he brought a player’s sensibility as well as great intelligence to the AFL Commission.

In addition, his real estate knowledge has been of great value as we worked through stadium and training and administration deals. He will be greatly missed and our game is much better for his long service at the top of the code.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the continued commitment to our game of AFL Commissioners Jason Ball, Paul Bassat, Richard Goyder, Major General Simone Wilkie and Kim Williams along with Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan.

Like other sections of our game, the issues we deal with are quite complex and demand a significant amount of time and, as Chairman, I could not ask for anything more from the AFL Commission who serve our game very well.

I want to thank the Commissioners for their time in dealing with the outcomes of the ASADA investigation and subsequent Court of Arbitration for Sport decision. This has been a major issue for our competition and the Commissioners’ guidance to the game throughout has been invaluable.

I also want to express the Commission’s view on the treatment of Adam Goodes by crowds during the season. Adamis, and will always be, a great champion of the AFL, and for racism to blight his final season is a great shame for our game. While we have much to be proud of in fighting racism and working with the Indigenous community, the Commission also acknowledges the journey we are all still on.

In finishing, I want to extend a special thank you to our CEO Gillon McLachlan and all AFL staff for their continued efforts on behalf of our game – we greatly value your time, effort and expertise.

Mike Fitzpatrick
Chairman
ESSENDON SANCTIONS

At the time of finalising this report, 34 current and former Essendon players were appealing against the Court of Arbitration for Sport which announced on January 12, 2016, that sanctions had been imposed on the players for breaches of the AFL’s Anti-Doping Policy. The ruling of the Court of Arbitration for Sport is included in the legal and integrity section of this report.

The 34 players were sanctioned with a period of ineligibility of two years, starting on March 31, 2015, with credit given for any individual period of ineligibility already served. The sanctions effectively excluded the players who remain on an AFL list or are working in a support or coaching capacity with an AFL club from participating in the 2016 season.

This decision arose after the World Anti-Doping Agency lodged an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport against the decision of the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal which handed down its decision on March 31, 2015, that it was not comfortably satisfied that any player had violated the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

While the Court of Arbitration for Sport imposed a tough sanction, the AFL accepted the decision of the Court of Arbitration for Sport. We were very disappointed for the players.

The players have paid a very high price, having a doping violation recorded and a suspension until November 2016.

The club, too, has paid a very high price and in 2013 received historic sanctions not seen before in our code.

The club accepted the sanctions and agreed it put its players in a position of unacceptable risk of being doped. The club has also acknowledged serious breaches of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in Victoria.

The officials involved all received sanctions. Former club staff member Stephen Dank has been given a life ban by the AFL, which excludes him from all sport, forever.

Port Adelaide, Melbourne, St Kilda and the Western Bulldogs also have players suspended.

This has been a very dark period, but the past four years will not define the Essendon Football Club.

It will not define Australian Football.

The club has two very respected people in new chairman Lindsay Tanner and new coach John Worsfold and the AFL is committed to doing what we can to assist the club in moving forward.

Our competition is stronger when Essendon is strong and all of our clubs want to see Essendon recover and rebuild and be the fierce and passionate competitor it is.

I would like to stress that the integrity of the competition, and the health of players are the most important things for our game – and we must fight to protect both. And we will.

Every decision we have made has been driven by these two pillars. At every stage of this process, we acted within our rules and our powers and we have assisted and co-operated with the anti-doping authorities – as we should. Every sport in the world faces the threat of doping, and new forms of doping. Fighting performance-enhancing drugs in sport is more important than ever.

We strongly believe our players are committed to anti-doping and that they want us to stand up and fight against performance-enhancing drugs.

Since 2012, the AFL has introduced several measures in response to the matters raised in the investigation:

We immediately conducted a review of the supplementation practices at all AFL clubs.

We also conducted detailed background checks on all sports-science and medical staff in the industry.

We significantly increased the size and powers of the AFL Integrity Department.

We enhanced the AFL Anti-Doping Code to include Treatment Rules that govern supplementation and medical treatments that go beyond the WADA Code.

And, finally, we introduced new rules that prohibit anyone other than the appropriate medical doctor giving injections.

This Essendon process has taken too long and the Court of Arbitration for Sport Judgment invites a discussion about the way the code applies to team sports in future.

We look forward to working with ASADA and WADA and with the Federal Government to keep sport clean and to protect the health and safety of players.

Micheleangelo Rucci
The Advertiser

Every one will have a lasting memory of Phil Walsh. Such a long and wide journey in football – with seven VFL-AFL clubs directly touched by Walsh – involves so many people who today are in shock and disbelief.

And there is the last time, the last memory with Phil Walsh.

At the Gabba on Saturday night – after the most-frustrating AFL game in which Walsh engineered a 13-point win against Brisbane – as the Adelaide Football Club media minions tried to wind up the after-match press conference, the first-year Crows coach said “thank you” for making the trip to Queensland.

For a man who went through a lengthy “chat” during his job interviews with the Adelaide Hierarchy about how he would deal with the confrontational football media, Walsh was reaffirming his dislike of the Fourth Estate was a myth.

He had started the job “uneasy” about being in the media, arguing he simply did not feel it was his strength. He was quick to learn how to survive under the bright lights.

Last week – as he threw a few in-jokes and Vincent van Gogh into his weekly press conference at West Lakes – Walsh revealed he was starting to enjoy being before the cameras and microphones. The myth was shattering.

But at the Gabba on Saturday night there was more about Phil Walsh the man than the coach – as he walked from a small, nondescript room under the grandstands.

His media team had wanted him out of the press conference quickly, so that he could start a much-needed team review and get organised for an early morning flight to Adelaide where he wanted to scout new selection options in the SANFL game at Alberton Oval on Sunday afternoon.

But Walsh was prepared to take on the meaningful questions about his team and his coaching. He was shattering the myth again.

And on the way out he asked a personal question – and stopped, despite his pressing agenda, for a meaningful chat.

It was not a throwaway question; it was an expression of concern and interest. He was caring of a matter beyond a football game.

It was not the toe-to-toe coach-versus-journalist moment many had feared would unfold this year to fulfill the mythical image of an intense Phil Walsh finally taking on the media.

It was the Phil Walsh the Adelaide Football Club came to know as a man of care as he made a bedside vigil with Brent Reilly at Royal Adelaide Hospital in late February after the defender had been seriously injured with a knock to the head in training at Thebarton Oval.

It was the Phil Walsh the Bailey family knew when Dean Bailey died of cancer last year and he stood by his widow Caron and her two sons – and at Adelaide Oval delivered the eulogy that made the Adelaide Football Club come to know as a man of care as he made a bedside vigil with Brent Reilly at Royal Adelaide Hospital in late February after the defender had been seriously injured with a knock to the head in training at Thebarton Oval.

It was the Phil Walsh the Bailey family knew when Dean Bailey died of cancer last year and he stood by his widow Caron and her two sons – and at Adelaide Oval delivered the eulogy that made the Adelaide Football Club recognize Walsh was more than an accomplished football coach.

Walsh’s care – and appreciation for more meaningful points in life, particularly after his near-death experience in Peru in October 2012 – highlighted the character and strength of the man.

The lasting memory of Phil Walsh is beyond football.
CEO’S REPORT

Securing a new broadcast rights agreement was not only one of the highlights of 2015, it will help to strengthen Australian Football at all levels.

The 2015 year was one of great challenge, and great achievement. We faced the death of one of our senior coaches, Phil Walsh, and a number of off-field issues that required the competition to come together to make decisions to protect the game and to show care for the football family. Other sections of the Annual Report celebrate Phil and his contribution to our game and deal with the other issues that challenged us this year.

Despite the challenges, I am very proud of our 18 AFL clubs, our 2600 community clubs and, indeed, of all those involved in our game, about the decisions we made that will strengthen our game into the future.

As CEO, I am also extremely proud of the AFL Executive team which assisted in the negotiations for a new broadcast rights agreement. The agreement, which starts in 2017 with our partners, Foxtel, News Ltd and Telstra, will deliver $2.508 billion to the game over six years. This new agreement will allow us to make decisions that strengthen our foundations and plan for our future.

THE FUTURE OF THE GAME

Our game is one of the oldest football codes in the world, with its beginnings in the 1850s, and several of our clubs are older than many of Europe’s leading soccer clubs. However, our history does not give us the right to claim the future.
The growth in participation by females in our game during the past five years has been extraordinary, going from 95,000 participants in 2011 to more than 318,000 in 2015. Since 2013, the Melbourne and Western Bulldogs Football Clubs have led the way in embracing women’s football and the commitment of these clubs has increased the drive and ambition of female athletes to play our game at the highest level.

The exhibition game between Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs in August 2015 drew a national audience on the Seven Network of 345,000 and a peak audience of 500,000. The work of these clubs has laid the foundation for a national women’s competition in 2017 and we are aiming for four teams from Victoria and one from each mainland state.

In 2016, we will play 10 exhibition games around Australia, culminating in a game between Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs on Saturday, September 3, which will be televised nationally by the Seven Network.

Melbourne has appointed Michelle Cowan as a development and welfare coach in 2016, while leading player Daisy Pearce, who has captained Melbourne during the past three years, has joined the club’s administration.

Michelle has coached Melbourne in the exhibition series during the past three years after working as an assistant coach for the South Fremantle and West Perth Football Clubs since 2012.

The academies are part of the AFL’s broader commitment to invest in the community foundations of the game and to build strong links between local communities, grassroots football and the elite level, to ensure our game is representative, inclusive and embraces gender and cultural diversity.

For Australian Football to prosper in the future, we must invest in new and emerging communities and reinforce the pathways for Indigenous Australians. The academies will deliver talent concessions to the clubs as an incentive to reach into new communities, enabling AFL clubs to be actively involved in introducing children of all backgrounds to the game and provide aspirational pathways for coaches, umpires and administrators.

In 2015, we announced the plan for Next Generation AFL club academies to increase the opportunity for young Indigenous and multicultural players to play our game. AFL clubs have been provided with seed funding to begin establishing academies in specific regions in 2016, with the objective of expanding the programs in 2017 and beyond.

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HAWTHORN HAT-TRICK

Only four clubs in the history of the AFL/VFL competition since 1897 have been able to do what Hawthorn did in 2015 – complete a hat-trick of premierships.

The club’s decisive victory over the West Coast Eagles was their fourth successive Toyota AFL Grand Final and completed successive premierships from 2013-15.

Other clubs to have achieved the feat are:
- Brisbane Lions 2001-03
- Melbourne 1955-57
- Melbourne 1939-41
- Carlton 1906-08

Collingwood is the only club to have won four successive premierships (1927-30), an achievement Hawthorn could equal in 2016.

Getting to the Grand Final is a difficult challenge and, despite the loss of key defenders Eric Mackenzie and Mitch Brown early in the year to season-ending knee injuries, the Eagles had their best season since their premiership of 2006.

From a West Australian perspective, the season was also a milestone for the Fremantle Football Club in winning the Dr Wm. C. McClelland Trophy for finishing on top of the ladder at the end of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, with the West Coast Eagles in second place. It was the first time the two WA-based clubs had finished in those positions in the same season.

Fremantle had another first when midfielder Nat Fyfe won the club’s inaugural Brownlow Medal.

I would also like to congratulate West Coast Eagles chairman Alan Cransberg, Chief Executive Officer Trevor Nisbett, General Manager – Football Craig Vozzo and senior coach Adam Simpson, the club’s board, players and staff for the achievement of reaching the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Congratulations to Hawthorn president Andrew Newbold, Chief Executive Officer Stuart Fox, General Manager – Football Operations Chris Fagan and senior coach Alastair Clarkson along with the board, players and staff for their continued excellence which has set a benchmark for the AFL competition.

EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Four men who have made extraordinary contributions to our game – Michael Malthouse, Dustin Fletcher, Chris Judd and Adam Goodes – were among those whose AFL careers came to an end in 2015.

On May 1, 2015, Michael Malthouse broke the record of 714 games as a senior coach previously held by Collingwood legend Jack McHale when he led Carlton against Collingwood at the MCG.

Michael’s coaching career finished on 718 games while his association with the game began as a player with St Kilda in 1972 before he joined Richmond in 1976. He played 374 games for the two clubs and was a member of Richmond’s last premiership team in 1980.

He coached the West Coast Eagles to their first two AFL premierships in 1992 and 1994 and then coached Collingwood to the 2010 premiership.

In 2015, Dustin Fletcher became only the third player in the competition’s history to reach the milestone of 400 senior games, the others being Hawthorn’s Michael Tuck and Richmond’s Kevin Bartlett.
He made his debut for Essendon in 1993, was a member of two premierships, won the best and fairest in 2000 – a premiership year – and was named an All-Australian twice. He also played eight international rules games for Australia, including the 2015 tour of Ireland.

Later in the season, he was joined in the 400 club by North Melbourne’s Brent Harvey, who finished 2015 on 409 games and could break the record of 426, held by Michael Tuck, in round 10, 2016.

The career of Chris Judd, one of our game’s most highly decorated players, was unfortunately cut short in round 10 against Adelaide at the MCG by a season-ending knee injury.

Chris played 279 games for the West Coast Eagles and Carlton, won the Brownlow Medal with both clubs, captained the Eagles to the 2006 premiership, won the Norm Smith Medal as best afield in the 2005 Grand Final, won five club best and fairest – two with the Eagles and three with the Blues – and was named an All-Australian six times, including 2008 as captain.

He was also a two-time winner of the AFL Players’ Association Most Valuable Player award.

Adam Goodes is also one of our most decorated players and the games record-holder for the Sydney Swans/South Melbourne.

After making his debut in 1999, Adam played in 372 games for the Swans and kicked 464 goals. He retired as a two-time premiership player, two-time winner of the Brownlow Medal, three-time best and fairest, four-time All-Australian, club captain and the AFL’s most decorated players and the AFL Players’ Association Most Valuable Player award.

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The debate that occurred about whether or not the booing was due to racism put further pressure on this great Indigenous leader and one of our game’s greatest champions.

Adam stood up to represent Indigenous people and he took a stand on racism, and for this I believe he was subject to hostility from some in our crowds.

As a game, we should have acted sooner and I am sorry we acted too slowly.

I am proud of the way the community, players from every club and supporters of the Sydney Swans made their support for Adam so public during his time away from the game, and on his return to play against Geelong.

The national conversation about racism taught me how important our role is to partner with all players to fight racism.

Adam has led with courage and humility and I look forward to the day our game can properly celebrate the retirement of this great champion.

INDIGENOUS ADVISORY GROUP

In February 2015, we announced the establishment of our first AFL Indigenous Advisory Council to provide advice to the AFL Commission and Executive on the development and implementation of the AFL’s Indigenous strategy and policies.

Yorta Yorta man Paul Briggs, chair of the Kaela Institute and president of the Rumbalara Football/Netball Club, was named as the advisory group’s inaugural chair.

Indigenous players and communities are a critical part of Australian Football and the Indigenous Advisory Council will assist the game to continue to be part of social and cultural change in Australia.

The establishment of the AFL Indigenous Advisory Council was part of the AFL’s Reconciliation Action Plan, which was released in 2014. At the end of 2015, members of the Indigenous Advisory Council included:

- Paul Briggs, Chair – Chair of the Kaela Institute and president Rumbalara Football/Netball Club
- Peter Yu (Deputy Chair) – Chair of North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAIL-SMA)
- Sam Mostyn – AFL Commissioner
- Kim Williams – AFL Commissioner
- Adam Goodes – 2014 Australian of the Year, two-time Sydney Swans premiership player and Brownlow medallist
- Jason Milford, Head of Diversity, AFL
- Professor Helen Milroy – Winthrop Professor and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health, University of Western Australia; Commissioner for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- Xavier Clarke – former St Kilda and Brisbane Lions player, senior coach Northern Territory Thunder
- Tanya Denning Orman – Channel Manager, NITV
- Jason Glavine – Chief Executive Officer, National Centre of Indigenous Excellence
- Tony Peek, Assistant to the CEO, AFL

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF COMMUNITY CLUBS

Our game has long been built on the foundations of community football, but its importance was highlighted by research released in 2015 into the influence and impact of local football clubs.

The research by La Trobe University, conducted in partnership with the AFL and AFL Victoria, found that local community football clubs generated a range of positive effects for local communities, including heightened levels of physical and mental wellbeing, social interaction and economic activity. The research, based on interviews and a survey of club members from across Victoria, highlights that regardless of where you live or how often you are involved in a football club each week, you are likely to experience greater social connectedness, wellbeing and physical and mental health than if you were not involved.

These benefits apply to all club participants, including players, coaches, volunteers and supporters.

The Centre for Sport and Social Impact at La Trobe University conducted the 12-month research project, involving in-depth case studies of nine clubs, 110 extensive interviews with club and community members and analysis of 4077 survey responses from individual club members. Highlights of the study included:

- For every dollar spent on a community football club at least $4.40 is returned in social value in terms of increased social connectedness, wellbeing, mental health status, employment outcomes, personal development and physical health.
- A football club’s reach is significant and extends beyond the players, coaches, administrators and volunteers within the club, to every one player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community.
- Football clubs provide individuals, particularly those aged 15-24, with significantly increased chances of securing employment via the social networks provided by the club.
- The self-reported mental health of people aged 18-24 associated with a football club is substantially higher than the general population.
- Football clubs are three times more useful for developing social networks than work, education or other community group networks.
ECONOMIC IMPACT

Australian Football is one of the major sports in Australia and is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry. The 2015 economic impact study by Street Ryan found that our game is:

- Australia’s premier spectator sport, attracting 15.22 million spectator attendances in 2015.
- Australia’s major football code in terms of regular participation with 1,247,575 participants.
- An industry sector which supports 7075 full-time equivalent jobs (excluding players and umpires).
- An industry sector which generated $5.72 billion in financial contribution to the Australian economy in 2015.
- Australian Football is the most national football code; evidenced by growth in participation in the non-traditional states of NSW and Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, which now accommodate 34 per cent of all participation (compared with 17 per cent in 2000).
- There were 15,223,460 spectator attendances at Australian Football matches in 2015. Of the total attendances, 46.4 per cent were at AFL matches.

EMPLOYMENT

- An estimated 174,811 Australian Football volunteers contributed 13.98 million working hours in 2015, worth the equivalent of $289 million in labour effort.
- Australian Football peak bodies, leagues, associations and clubs employed 16,174 people in 2015 (excluding players and umpires): 
  - 29 per cent full-time
  - 26.5 per cent part-time
  - 44.5 per cent casual
- This represented 7075 full-time equivalent jobs.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The total financial contribution of Australian Football to the Australian economy in 2015 is estimated to be $5.72 billion. This was $467 million more than the $5.26 billion financial contribution calculated in 2014, representing an increase of 8.9 per cent (and an average annual increase of 6.7 per cent since 2007).
TRAVELLING TO THE TOP

Matt Priddis celebrates as the West Coast Eagles win through to the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final. Thousands of Eagles fans flocked to Melbourne the following week.

As part of the economic impact, AFL matches generated more than $544 million in domestic tourism tied to AFL matches in metropolitan and regional centres around Australia. This included more than 288,000 air travellers and 712,000 room nights in various cities.

THE AFL TEAM

In May 2015, our Chief Financial Officer of 15 years, Ian Anderson, announced his retirement from the AFL.

The highlights of his career with the AFL included:

- Revenue growth from $110 million in 2000 to $458 million in 2014.
- The establishment of AFL finance shared services which provides full financial services to five state bodies and payroll services to 11 AFL clubs.
- The introduction of a national insurance program that provides cover to the majority of community leagues and clubs throughout Australia.
- The signing of a technology-sharing agreement with Major League Baseball that has enabled the AFL to work with this leading US sport on a number of key IT projects.
- The signing of two major AFL partners – Virgin Australia and the Accor Hotel Group.

In June, we announced the appointment of Ray Gunston as General Manager Finance, Corporate & Major Projects.

Ray has had extensive experience as a senior executive and a company director in a variety of industries, including as interim Chief Executive Officer of the Essendon Football Club and before that as Chief Financial Officer of the Tatts Group.

In addition to the Tatts Group, Ray has had executive roles with Westpac, Price Waterhouse, Aluminum Smelters of Victoria, Southern Cross Austereo and the Victorian Government. He is a non-executive director of Sigma Pharmaceuticals and Hotel Property Investments. Ray has also previously held non-executive director roles with AFL Victoria and the Melbourne Renegades.

In August 2015, our General Manager, People, Customer and Community, Dorothy Hisgrove, announced her resignation after more than two years in the role.

Dorothy made a significant contribution to the AFL, leading change that saw a stronger and more diverse organisation.

In closing, I would like to thank all AFL staff throughout Australia for their contribution to the game in 2015. I am very fortunate to work with such a talented and committed group of people.

Gillon McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer
A clear focus of the industry in 2015 was enhancing the match-day experience and ensuring our game remains accessible and affordable for all fans.

This culminated in delivering a range of initiatives, including reduced food and beverage prices at the MCG and Etihad Stadium, free entry for children on Sundays at matches in Melbourne and the opportunity to have a kick on the arena after the final siren – all of which were wholeheartedly embraced by our fans.

A more family-friendly fixture was also a highlight with attendances at games during the home and away season increasing slightly on 2014 figures, despite the ladder position of several Victorian clubs with large supporter bases.

A record-breaking TV rights deal, signed in August and set to run from 2017-22 with partners the Seven Network, News Corporation and Telstra, allows for an increased investment in our game at all levels.

Our broadcast partners continue to lead the way in how they present the game to supporters around the country and internationally. We are grateful for their ongoing support and professionalism.

 Enhancing the experience for fans at the ground and in front of their television sets was a major focus in 2015.

After a disrupted 2015 season because of injury, skipper Gary Ablett will lead the Suns’ push for a maiden finals appearance in 2016.
BROADCASTING

The 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season continued to attract viewers from across Australia with the Seven Network’s free-to-air television broadcast and Foxtel/Fox Footy’s subscription television platform drawing large numbers each week.

The average gross national audience per round of the premiership season across free-to-air and subscription television remained strong at 4.466 million.

The cumulative gross national audience during the home and away season reached close to 103 million (102,722,355), down from 109 million in 2014. The reduction was attributable in part to the fixture containing fewer standalone matches than in 2014.

Seven Network metropolitan audiences were down slightly year-on-year (1 per cent), a marginal decline compared to the decline in Australian free-to-air television ratings generally. Overall, there was a 2.6 per cent decline across FTA (metro and regional) and pay TV ratings in 2015.

THE TOYOTA AFL FINALS SERIES

The Toyota AFL Finals Series saw a total cumulative audience of 16.588 million across the four weeks, including the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

The finals series began with the highest ratings for an opening week and continued to attract strong numbers throughout, culminating in a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 3.534 million for the Grand Final on the Seven Network.

This represented a 5.33 per cent decrease on the 3.73 million viewers who tuned into the 2014 Grand Final between the Sydney Swans and Hawthorn.

The metropolitan audience of 2.645 million viewers made it the second most-watched match on metropolitan free-to-air television in 2015. The 2015 Brownlow Medal count on the Seven Network and Fox Footy attracted a record national average audience of 1.78 million across FTA and STV platforms, representing a 3.6 per cent increase on last year’s 1.7 million.

The most-watched matches of the 2015 season (national average audiences across free-to-air and subscription television) were:

1. Round 4 – Essendon v Collingwood – 1.399 million (Anzac Day)
2. Round 14 – Collingwood v Hawthorn – 1.378 million
3. Round 10 – Fremantle v Richmond – 1.298 million
4. Round 20 – Sydney Swans v Collingwood – 1.243 million
5. Round 18 – Hawthorn v Richmond – 1.203 million
6. Round 12 – Richmond v West Coast Eagles – 1.198 million
7. Round 13 – Fremantle v Collingwood – 1.192 million
8. Round 11 – Port Adelaide v Geelong – 1.164 million
9. Round 23 – Richmond v North Melbourne – 1.141 million
10. Round 6 – Collingwood v Geelong – 1.137 million

FOXTEL/FOX FOOTY

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

This was in addition to the proven weekly magazine programs such as On The Couch, AFL 360, League Teams, Open Mike, Bounce and The Winners Rebooted.

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

Significant highlights and changes included broadcasting the second half of the Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner live (including the induction of Tony Lockett as an Australian Football Legend), as well as showcasing the NAB AFL Draft across two of its main sports channels – Fox Footy and Fox Sports 503.

A major achievement for the network was the integration of popular AFL programs such as AFL 360 and Bounce into the Fox Footy Festival precinct which drew large and excited crowds to the MCG in the week of the Grand Final.

The most-watched Fox Footy-produced match timered across the season was Saturday afternoon with an average of 213,334 viewers nationally per round.

The most-watched regular Fox Footy broadcast timered overall was Friday night with an average of 254,857 viewers nationally per round.

The highest-rating Foxel broadcast match for the home and away season was the round 20 clash between the Sydney Swans and Collingwood, which attracted 318,941 average national viewers.

INTERNATIONAL TV RIGHTS

International AFL fans were brought closer to the game with increased broadcast coverage of home and away matches, finals series matches, the Toyota AFL Grand Final, the Virgin Australia International Rules Series and AFL events. These matches and events were broadcast throughout the year into more than 250 countries and territories worldwide by rights holders Australia Plus, ESPN, Fox Sports/Fox Soccer Plus, Eurosport, Ddigital Showtime Network, Over the Line Sports Media, Sky New Zealand, Super Sport, TSN and Claro Sports.

The AFL was also fortunate to secure agreements during the year with new rights holders RSC (Quebec) and TVNZ (New Zealand), meaning international coverage of the game continues to grow.

The AFL’s digital streaming service on watch afl.com.au broadcast every match of every round live and on demand internationally (excluding Australia) on desktop, mobile and tablet.

It also broadcast all AFL events live or on demand, including the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, and provided a 24/7 video service showcasing replays of past seasons’ matches and a host of AFL news programs, features and vignettes from each club and AFL Media.

This coverage ensured fans outside Australia received the greatest possible access to the game across all media platforms.

RADIO

Radio again played a significant role in taking the game to all corners of the country in 2015.

The AFL’s radio partners in metropolitan areas are 3AW, Triple M, ABC Radio, SEN, FFV6 and 6PR. Regional areas received AFL broadcasts via ABC Radio, K-Rock (Geelong), Gold FM (Gold Coast), Crocmedia, Southern Cross Austereo and the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS).

In Melbourne, all nine matches each round during the 2015 Toyota AFL
Premiership Season and all matches in the Toyota AFL Finals Series were broadcast on radio, while every match featuring an AFL club from Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales was broadcast into their respective home states.

All Toyota AFL Finals Series matches (including the Toyota AFL Grand Final) were broadcast nationally on radio.

A gross audience of 1.93 million people per week listened to AFL matches during the radio survey periods 4-6 in 2015 (these being the three survey periods that fall during the six months of the season).

This was slightly down on the gross audience of 2.02 million per week in 2014, due largely to the reduced number of standalone matches.

Through the popular AFL app, the AFL radio broadcast rights holders averaged a unique audience of 46,000 per match-day during the premiership season and 39,000 per match day during the Finals series.

This represented an annual growth rate of 25 per cent and 31 per cent respectively.

**Clubs**

The Club Services team implemented a new Club Action Plans process with recipient clubs in the first year of a new Competitive Balance Policy. Recipient clubs are those which received increased distributions from the AFL as a form of revenue sharing under the AFL Competitive Balance Policy.

**Competitive Balance Action Plans:**

- Development of Club Action Plans for recipient clubs and the two expansion clubs.
- Action Plans identify the key initiatives or high-priority issues a club must focus on in the coming 12 months as well as describe a set of funding conditions and reporting requirements these clubs must adhere to.
- The AFL provides support to these clubs in the development of these plans and through ongoing assistance in the achievement of the key initiatives identified. This assistance can include:
  - Advice in the development of club strategic and operational plans.
  - Analytical and strategic consultation for key transactions or arrangements (ie new training and administration facilities, stadium agreements).
  - Advice in the development of commercial strategies and implementation of plans (eg. sponsorship support, digital revenue plans, fundraising programs).
  - Provision of benchmarking and best-practice information.
  - The AFL also works closely with club management to understand the financial performance of the club and identify and address any risks.
  - A number of key initiatives have been achieved across all recipient clubs, including a significant improvement in financial performance:
    - All recipient clubs achieved an improvement in their underlying profitability.
    - Aggregate debt across the eight clubs reduced.
  - Having reviewed the first year of this process, we expect to make further improvements for 2016, working closer with clubs to support them in the achievement of their goals.

There was significant work undertaken in relation to stadia:

- Facilitated the review of the Adelaide Oval commercial model, which secured the two South Australian clubs a higher share of stadium income and greater financial security.
- Ongoing support for the two West Australian clubs in their planning for a potential move to the new Perth Stadium, including assistance in their discussions with the State Government over an acceptable user agreement.
- Worked with the Western Bulldogs, the Victorian Government and the City of Ballarat on the redevelopment of Eureka Stadium to host home and away matches in the future.

The production of the fixture was overseen by Simon Lethelean in his role as General Manager of Broadcasting, Scheduling and Major Projects before an organisation restructure in August 2015.

The 2016 fixture, which again kicks off over Easter with a series of blockbuster matches, contains for the first time a bye between the final round of the home and away season and the first week of the Toyota AFL Finals Series.

The season will continue to operate under a 23-round format, with all clubs to play 11 home and 11 away games.

The season structure will have 20 rounds of nine matches and three rounds (3-15) where six matches will be played each week, enabling six clubs to have a bye in each round.

The 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final will be played on Saturday, October 1. A standard round in 2016, as part of the AFL’s broadcast agreement with the Seven Network and FoxTEL/Fox Footy, will continue to feature:

- One Friday night match
- Two Saturday night matches
- One early Sunday match
- One Sunday afternoon match
- One Sunday twilight match

There will also be five matches played on Thursday nights – one to open the season in round one at the MCG and four in consecutive weeks from rounds 14-17 around the byes for all clubs.

**Highlights**

A total of 126 home and away matches will be played in venues throughout every state and territory, with matches outside the regular capital cities to be played in Cairns (one), Darwin (one), Alice Springs (one), Hobart (three), Canberra (three) and Launceston (four).

Key features of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season include:

- Opening Round to start with a Thursday night match between Richmond and Carlton.
- Round one to continue over Easter with the Sydney Swans to face off against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium on Saturday night and reigning triple premiers the Western Bulldogs an early test in the following round.
- Round 16 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 17 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 18 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 19 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 20 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 21 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 22 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
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- Round 24 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 25 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 26 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 27 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 28 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 29 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 30 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 31 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 32 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
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- Round 34 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 35 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 36 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 37 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 38 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 39 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 40 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
- Round 41 will feature the third fixture between the two Victorian teams, with Geelong against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium and the Geelong Cats hosting Richmond.
premier Hawthorn and the Geelong Cats to close out the holiday weekend with an Easter Monday blockbuster at the MCG.

Round two to be highlighted by the Showdown between the Adelaide Crows and Port Adelaide and the Grand Final rematch at the MCG between Hawthorn and West Coast.

A first Friday night match in Tasmania when North Melbourne hosts Richmond at Blundstone Arena in round 11.

A Sunday night match on Anzac Day eve between MCG co-tenants Melbourne and Richmond.

The GWS Giants to host three matches at Canberra’s Manuka Oval, in rounds two, four and 19, against the Geelong Cats, Port Adelaide and Richmond.

Melbourne to host two matches in the Northern Territory, against Port Adelaide in round 10 in Alice Springs and Fremantle in Darwin in round 16.

The match between the Western Bulldogs and Gold Coast Suns at Cazalys Stadium in Cairns will take place on Saturday night in round 17.

Sir Doug Nicholls Round, to celebrate the contribution of Indigenous players to the game, to be celebrated in round 10, highlighted by the showpiece Essendon v Richmond Dreamtime at the ‘G match on the Saturday night.

Multicultural Round to be celebrated in round 16.

The AFL has again utilised the ‘weighted rule’ in constructing the 2016 fixture to address the issue of on-field equity for all clubs. The final ladder from the previous season has been grouped into the top six teams, middle six teams and bottom six teams in order to manage the equality of double match-ups while also ensuring our venue and broadcast obligations are met.

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

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

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

A wide range of initiatives has been positively embraced by our workforce which has grown to more than 650 nationally. These have included recognition and reward, embedding our values, engagement, professional development, diversity and employee volunteering.

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

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

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BUILDING A HIGHLY ENGAGED TEAM

At the AFL, we know that having a highly engaged workforce leads to strong business performance.
Our vibe employee survey conducted in September provided a great insight into how we are tracking as an organisation – what we are doing well and what we need to continue to build on and improve.

Our people told us we have made great progress over the past 12 months, with results showing they are optimistic about the future and feel we are investing more in their development and career than ever before.

The survey indicated we have become better at celebrating our wins along the way and keeping our people informed about the ever-changing landscape of our industry.

Our People Plan for 2016 will focus on the areas our people told us are more important to them.

**A WORKPLACE WHERE DIFFERENCE IS VALUED**

In 2015, the AFL made a strong commitment to improve the diversity of our workforce and promote a more inclusive culture where we fully embrace the difference in our people's backgrounds, experiences, views and ideas to achieve better outcomes for our game.

A key focus on and off the field has been improving our gender diversity and keeping our people informed about the ever-changing landscape of our industry.

Our People Plan for 2016 will focus on the areas our people told us are more important to them.

**EMBRACING OUR VALUES**

It has been 12 months since the AFL launched its new values as part of our commitment to creating a values-based culture.

At the AFL, we value:

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

Our people have embraced our values and they are now embedded in everything we do. This includes how we recruit new people, manage performance, identify talent and reward success. Importantly, our values have also created a common language that sets expectations for what it means to be a member of the AFL team.

**BUILDING WORLD-CLASS LEADERS**

This year we have invested significantly in developing our leaders. More than 100 of our ‘People Leaders’ participated in our Leadership Essentials Program. The program focused on building personal and organisational leadership, including understanding their style and impact on team members, the mindset of a leader, strategy, culture and leading change.

**GRAEME SAMUEL SCHOLARSHIP**

Rose King from the Geelong Football Club and Ameet Bains from the St Kilda Football Club were announced as joint recipients of the Graeme Samuel Scholarship in 2015.

**JILL LINDSAY SCHOLARSHIP**

AFL Queensland Statewide Auskick coordinator Emily Wastle was awarded the 2015 Jill Lindsay Scholarship at the seventh Women’s Industry Lunch in May.

Lindsay was the AFL’s longest-serving employee, having completed 41 years in various roles including VFL Park match-day manager and VFL membership manager before being appointed grounds operations manager in 1991. On February 7, 2011, Lindsay passed away after losing her battle with cancer.

In recognition of her outstanding service, the AFL Commission created the annual Jill Lindsay Scholarship to be awarded to the female graduate with the most potential to come through the AFL SportReady program.

Before being appointed statewide Auskick coordinator, Wastle was the Queensland AFL SportsReady Trainee of the Year in 2012 and has completed Certificates I and II in Community Recreation and a Certificate IV in Business.

Wastle, 22, spent two years working as the development coordinator in the Brisbane South region and was responsible for the diversity portfolio that engaged more than 2000 participants with an Islamic background in her regional area.

Wastle also coached the women’s under-17 regional program and was assistant coach at the state under-16 championships. She is completing a Bachelor of Business Management and Human Resources at Griffith University.

Winston Salem presents Emily Wastle with her award.
The scholarship is awarded by the AFL Commission in recognition of Graeme Samuel’s contribution to the game as one of the original AFL Commissioners and a person who played an invaluable role in the strategic direction of the AFL competition over two decades.

The award is $20,000 for future study or professional development.

King is the General Manager People and Culture at Geelong. She joined the Cats in 2010, having held senior management roles in the commercial, not-for-profit and government sectors, including Sport New Zealand.

Bains is the Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel at St Kilda. He has been leading substantial change at the Saints – overseeing stronger governance and integrity processes, restructurings the club’s player payments and developing a new focus on international player recruitment.

### STADIUM INFRASTRUCTURE

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

**Perth Stadium**

The West Australian Government is in the process of building a new multi-purpose stadium on the Burswood Peninsula, due for completion by the start of the 2018 AFL season.

The new Perth stadium will hold around 60,000 people.

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

The AFL and the two WA AFL clubs have been working with the WA Government and the West Stadium consortium to ensure all elements of the new stadium are best practice for AFL matches.

A joint football working group comprising the AFL and WA AFL clubs is working closely with WA Government officials to develop an acceptable user agreement which will govern access to the new stadium for AFL matches and events.

**Blundstone Arena**

The redevelopment of Blundstone Arena in Hobart was completed in time for the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup. The first AFL match played with the new stand operational was the sold-out North Melbourne v Richmond match in round six. The match attracted a crowd of 17,544, which was a record for the venue.

The $33 million project, co-funded by the Tasmanian and Federal governments ($25 million each) and Cricket Tasmania ($3 million), increased the capacity of Blundstone Arena from around 15,000 to 20,000 patrons.

A large part of the redevelopment was the construction of the new Ricky Ponting Stand, which comprised new facilities for players and coaching staff of cricket and AFL, state-of-the-art media and officials’ facilities, new function rooms and suites and undercover seating for the general public.

The redevelopment also included a new gate entry at the southern end and other improvements to catering and toilet facilities for the general public.

**Etihad Stadium**

In 2015, Etihad Stadium opened its new coaches boxes in place of the original coaches boxes built in 2000. The boxes were greatly appreciated by all AFL clubs who used them and featured more space for coaches and staff, better view lines and best-practice information and communication technology.

Etihad Stadium also unveiled its new PTV system and public Wi-Fi system. This $2 million investment featured more than 1200 new TV screens and free venue-wide publicly available Wi-Fi for patrons, helping improve the fan experience at the venue.

**Eureka Stadium**

The planning for the development of Eureka Stadium in Ballarat is underway. This development, which is funded by the Victorian State Government, will allow the stadium to host Western Bulldogs home matches from 2017.

The project will increase the capacity of the venue to around 11,000, including about 5000 seats. The development will include the reseating of the playing field, new playing field lighting and new LED video board.

**AFL Club Training and Administration Facilities**

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

In Western Australia, Fremantle is developing a new home base in the City of Cockburn, which is due for completion in 2016, while the West Coast Eagles are planning to move their headquarters to Lathlain Park in the town of Victoria Park, sharing facilities with the Perth Football Club and broader community.

The Gold Coast Suns are developing a new facility as part of the Gold Coast Indoor Sports Centre, which forms part of the infrastructure being developed for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

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

In 2015, Collingwood opened its new Glasshouse facility adjacent to Bob Rose Oval. The Glasshouse will augment the club’s existing operations and be open to the local community.

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

### Strategy

As the AFL approaches the final year of the five-year strategic plan, the Strategy team has led or supported significant work to start planning for the future.

In addition to the business planning functions performed by the Strategy department, the team also supported a range of major strategic projects for the industry.

**Major industry strategy projects:**

- Commercial valuation and negotiation support for next broadcast rights deal worth $2.508 billion over 2017-22.
- Evaluation of various commercial and equity ownership opportunities for the industry.
- Commercial valuation and negotiation support for corporate sponsorship agreements with our major partners.
- Development of a new points-based bidding system for Father-Son and club Academy draft picks at the 2016 National Draft.
- Supported development of the Future Directions of Australian Football review with Game Development, AFL clubs and community football stakeholders.

### Future investment planning:

- Development of an overview of industry finances, strategic outcomes achieved and financial challenges faced for key meetings with AFL club presidents and CEOs.
- Development of framework to develop the future investment model and address needs of all industry stakeholders together – clubs, fans, community, competition, infrastructure and players.
- Review of AFL investment in community facilities development and the future of the AFL Community Facilities Development Reserve (FDR).
- Pilot development of a new Customer Data Warehouse to better manage participant, membership, ticketing, digital and fan data and analytics.
- New services agreement with Fox Sports Pulse to provide technology and data services and support broader development of an industry customer data strategy.
- Engagement of customer relationship management and technology experts to assist development of the industry customer data strategy.

### Planning and support functions:

- Managed annual strategic planning processes with the AFL Commission, Executive and senior managers.
- Facilitated discussion of key strategic and other industry issues at AFL Commission, AFL Executive, club CEOs/presidents and state CEO meetings.
- General business planning support for the AFL Commission, CEO and Executive.
It was a challenging but successful year for the AFL’s Football Operations Department which implemented changes to key processes and policies.

The AFL’s Football Operations Department successfully introduced major changes to the game’s disciplinary system around the Match Review Panel and the Tribunal for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season. These changes were introduced primarily to simplify the understanding of the game’s judiciary process for all members of the football community.

Over the past 12 months, the Level Four Coaching Program for leading coaching candidates was significantly expanded and department staff had central roles in major changes around the competition rules relating to Father-Son and Academy Player bidding at the National Draft, the trading of future draft selections and key Laws changes.

In close consultation with the AFL Players Association, the game’s world-leading Illicit Drug Policy was significantly revamped, with major changes announced after the end of the 2015 premiership season.

The Football Department is primarily responsible for the operation of the elite AFL competition and staff responded strongly in difficult circumstances to the unprecedented cancellation of a game in 2015, following the tragic death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh.

The death of a serving senior coach shocked all parts of the Australian sporting community and the football department was required to ensure the AFL competition could appropriately grieve for the loss of Walsh while displaying the professionalism required for the season’s remaining matches to continue.

Dockers dynamo
Livewire small forward Michael Walters led the goalkicking as Fremantle finished the home and away season on top of the ladder for the first time.

MARK EVANS
GENERAL MANAGER
TRIBUNAL/ MRP CHANGES

The AFL Commission approved changes to the operation of the Match Review Panel and AFL Tribunal for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, designed largely to simplify the understanding of the game's judiciary process for all members of the football community.

The key changes included:
- All offences categorised as fines or matches of suspension, no longer using any reference to base demerit points.
- The elimination of carryover points on any offence.
- Conduct graded in two categories only - intentional or careless.
- The MRP to issue fines, two-match and three-match suspensions, with more serious offences referred to the Tribunal.
- Simplification of the Bad Record system around whether a player was suspended/not suspended for a match in any particular home and away.

In 2016, the guidelines for dangerous tackles will enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact and the following changes will also be made:

**Appeal Grounds** – A manifestly inadequate sanction or classification will be available as appeal grounds. This has been introduced after the AFL considered it could not appeal a suspension that was deemed too low, whereas a player or club retained the right to appeal a suspension that was deemed too high.

**Impact Guidelines** – The wording around the potential to cause serious injury will be expanded to include intentional head high strikes and high bumps with significant head contact and or player momentum.

**Contact With An Injured Player** – This will be deemed as a fixed financial sanction on the table of offences.

**MRP CHANGES**

The key changes included:
- Premiership Season, designed largely to
- TRIBUNAL/
- Retention of discounts for early pleas
- Simplification of the Bad Record
- No. of cases not sustained 11 12 6 15 5 3 8 2 5 1
- No. of players suspended 45 37 41 43 51 47 59 59 55 36
- Low-level financial sanctions ($) - - - - - - - - - 7 7,500
- Demerit points.

**No. of cases not sustained**

- 11
- 12
- 6
- 15
- 5
- 3
- 8
- 2
- 5
- 1

**No. of players suspended**

- 45
- 37
- 41
- 43
- 51
- 47
- 59
- 59
- 55
- 36

**Low-level financial sanctions**

- 7
- 7,500

**Demerit points.**

**Match lost through suspension**

- 71
- 71
- 77
- 86
- 87
- 12
- 104
- 75
- 57

**Fixed financial sanctions ($)**

- 66,000
- 14,800
- 65,200
- 101,700
- 77,000
- 92,600
- 159,850
- 91,550
- 96,350
- 95,000

**Reprimands**

- 36
- 38
- 31
- 29
- 42
- 47
- 41
- 38
- 41
- 1

The previous Tribunal system operated from 2003-14. The revised Tribunal system was introduced for the 2015 season.

**ILLCIT DRUG POLICY**

A revised Illicit Drugs Policy was announced after the end of the 2015 season, after wide-ranging discussions through the year between the AFL and AFLPA, medical officers and AFL clubs.

- Enhanced player education and counseling programs – to help players with meaningful and lasting behavioural changes.
- Appropriate systems of medical interventions as required – delivered by the AFL Medical Officer, AFL doctors and medical experts.
- Opportunity for players to modify behaviour at first detection – interventions at this stage do not involve a playing or financial sanction but trigger education and counseling programs, along with targeted testing.
- Stricter set of consequences for players who failed a drug test or behaviour – public suspension and fine after second detection.
- Increased club involvement – clubs informed earlier and greater involvement in education and counseling programs.
- Urine testing and year-round hair testing – use testing to determine consequences; hair testing to monitor behaviour and direct target testing and education programs.
- No public release of results – the AFL will no longer release the results of Illicit drug testing.
- Self-notification – players will be permitted to self-notification, allowed only if they have not previously been identified under the Illicit Drugs Policy.
- Players in the AFL’s Talent Pathway programs will also undergo testing with detections of an illicit substance to be communicated to the respective club doctor or head coach on-draft.

**Interventions and consequences**

- First detection: $5000 financial sanction (suspended) and compulsory counseling and education programs.
- Second detection: Four-match suspension and $5000 sanction imposed. Club notified and the suspension confirmed publicly.
- Third detection: 12-match suspension. Where a player is deemed as acting outside the spirit of the policy by failing to comply with the prescribed program or demonstrating risky behaviour, clubs may also be notified.

These changes were agreed between all parties to reflect the continued evolution of the IDP, acknowledging the complex nature of illicit drug use while striking a balance between protecting the health and wellbeing of players and providing appropriate deterrents and controls to shift player behaviour.

The AFL wishes to restate for the record that those-listed players agreed to a regime of testing and sanctions for illicit drug taking above and beyond the testing for performance-enhancing drugs, as part of their responsibility as a professional athlete.

The game continues to enact this policy, when many sports have no version of a policy in operation, because the AFL industry understands the threat of illicit drugs to players’ health and wellbeing, and we also believe the privilege of playing AFL comes with a responsibility to the club and to the game.

**TRANSITION TO NEW SYSTEM**

- Players with one detection more than two years old (with no further positive tests) will enter the new system with no detections.
- If a player is on two detections, his next detection will result in four-week suspension and the $5000 fine.
- If a player is on one detection, the next detection will be a $5000 fine, plus the club informed but no suspension.

**NAB AFL ACADEMY HEAD COACH**

Brenton Sanderson was appointed from a high-quality field of applicants to guide the overall development of the elite teenage players in the country as they prepared for possible AFL careers.


As the NAB AFL Academy head coach, Sanderson’s primary role was to oversee the development and training path of the elite junior players selected from the NAB AFL Under-18 and NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, with two major priorities around match-specific coaching to assist the on-field development of young talent and off-field education to ensure they can thrive in an AFL club environment.

**LEVEL FOUR SENIOR COACH PROGRAM**

The AFL introduced its Level Four Program in 2015 to prepare highly rated assistant coaches for a potential head coach position at an AFL club with concentrated mentoring and development work, beyond the existing Level Three Program. John Baker (Carlton), Brendon Bolton (then Hawthorn), Blake Caracella (Geelong), Stuart Dew (Sydney Swans), Simon Goodwin (Melbourne), Robert Harvey (Collingwood), Adam Kingsley (St Kilda), Simon Lloyd (then Fremantle) and Matthew Nicks (Port Adelaide) were the leading contenders in a high-quality field of applicants who sought to be part of the program.

The selection process involved an extensive application, peer and senior coach review and an interview conducted by a combination of highly regarded coaches and CEOs. Former AFL coach Peter Schaub and 2006 West Coast premiership coach John Warford were joined by Socceroos coach Ange Postecoglou, leading hockey coach Ric Charlesworth and club CEOs Trevor Nibett (West Coast), Greg Swan (Brisbane Lions), Peter Jackson (Melbourne) and Brian Cook (Geelong).

The course centres around four key components – core coaching modules, an individual learning plan, a program for high-impact leadership and individual coach mentoring. The core modules address areas including rules, regulations, governance, integrity, government relations and the economy of the game. Other modules address quality coaching practice, strategic communications, media training and ethical leadership.

Four mentor coaches are involved with the program – Neale Daniher (football), Ric Charlesworth (hockey), Cliff Maltiet (athletics) and John Buchanan (cricket). With mentoring and development work, beyond the existing Level Three Program. John Baker (Carlton), Brendon Bolton (then Hawthorn), Blake Caracella (Geelong), Stuart Dew (Sydney Swans), Simon Goodwin (Melbourne), Robert Harvey (Collingwood), Adam Kingsley (St Kilda), Simon Lloyd (then Fremantle) and Matthew Nicks (Port Adelaide) were the leading contenders in a high-quality field of applicants who sought to be part of the program. The current group of coaches will be the elite junior players selected from the next year’s program and a new group will start in February 2016.
AFL UMPIRING DEPARTMENT
The 2015 season was a success for the umpiring department. A 4 per cent decrease in error rate, as judged by the umpires’ coaches, was a great result. The introduction of a refocusing and tighter interpretation of holding the ball was universally applauded by the football world.

A mid-season change in interpretation of the driving with the head rule was challenging, but the result for player safety was a highlight of the year.

A new structure in goal and boundary coaching led to a more national approach, which saw all but one state represented in finals. A greater emphasis on boundary throw-ins led to a marked improvement while goal umpiring across Australia, continued to be of a very high standard.

An extensive four-umpire trial saw eight games in the NAB Challenge and seven premiership season games with an extra umpire on the ground. The trial was a success with the system putting umpires in better positions in less-fatigued state. GPS figures showed a dramatic reduction in high-end running, meaning umpires should not be forced out of the game due to physical limitations were the system introduced.

The need for a far greater number of umpires to be listed has meant the system will not be introduced in 2016. A fast-tracking development program has been introduced for umpires just below AFL level, with a view to them being ready to fill the required spots were the system to be introduced in 2017.

The Score Review System saw 35 decisions overturned that would have been errors, of which eight were initiated by the score review official. The time taken for each review was reduced from an average of 30 seconds in 2014 to 2015 in 2015. There were four errors made out of 143 reviews. While the goal is to have no errors, the number of corrected decisions was rated as a success in 2015.

2015 GRAND FINAL UMPIRES
FIELD
Matt Stiek, Jeff Dalgleish, Brett Rosebury
Emergency: Ray Chamberlain
BOUNDARY
Nathan Dogg, Matthew Tomkins, Ian Burrows, Chris Gordon
Emergency: Michael Marantelli
GOAL
Chris Appleton, Adam Wojcik
Emergency: Luke Walker

MILESTONES
100 GAMES
Sam Hay (F), Jeff Dalgleish (F), Brett Dalgleish (G), Cameron Ward (B), Michael Marantelli (B), Tim Morrison (B), Drew Kowalski (B), Dale Edwick (G), Stephen Williams (G), Tristan Symes (G)
200 GAMES
Ian Burrows (B), Nathan Dogg (B), Luke Walker (G), Jason Venkataya (G), Chris Appleton (G)
300 GAMES
Justin Schmitt (F), John Morris (G)

INTERNATIONAL RULES
Australia played Ireland in a one-off Test for the 2015 International Rules Series at Croke Park in Dublin on November 21, with Ireland proving successful by four points in a closely fought contest.

The 2015 season saw the back of last year’s successful meeting between the two countries in Perth, which Australia won, before Ireland regained the Cormac McAnallen Trophy on home soil.

Selection for the Australian team was only open to players who had earned All-Australian selection through their AFL career, with the coaching staff led by Alastair Clarkson, Chris Scott and Ross Lyon.

The 2015 Virgin Australia International Rules capped was Hayden Ballantyne (Freemantle), Eddie Betts (Adelaide Crowes), Grant Birchall (Hawthorn), Luke Breust (Hawthorn), Patrick Dangerfield (Adelaide Crowes, now Geelong Cats), Dustin Fletcher (Essendon), Andrew Gaff (West Coast), Brendon Goddard (Essendon), Robbie Katter (Port Adelaide), Joel Selwood (Essendon), Luke Hodge (Hawthorn), Sam Mitchell (Hawthorn), Leigh Montagna (St Kilda), David Mundy (Freemantle), Robert Murphy (Western Bulldogs), Nick Rewoldt (St Kilda), Tom Rockliff (Brisbane Lions), Jack Riewoldt (St Kilda), David Mundy (Freemantle), Andrew Gaff (West Coast), Ross Lyon.

The 2015 Virgin Australia International Rules capped was Hayden Ballantyne (Freemantle), Eddie Betts (Adelaide Crowes), Grant Birchall (Hawthorn), Luke Breust (Hawthorn), Patrick Dangerfield (Adelaide Crowes, now Geelong Cats), Dustin Fletcher (Essendon), Andrew Gaff (West Coast), Brendon Goddard (Essendon), Robbie Katter (Port Adelaide), Joel Selwood (Essendon), Luke Hodge (Hawthorn), Sam Mitchell (Hawthorn), Leigh Montagna (St Kilda), David Mundy (Freemantle), Robert Murphy (Western Bulldogs), Nick Rewoldt (St Kilda), Tom Rockliff (Brisbane Lions), Jack Riewoldt (St Kilda), David Mundy (Freemantle), Andrew Gaff (West Coast), Ross Lyon.

The 2015 International Rules Series came on the back of Australia’s last win over Ireland in 2005.

LAW OF THE GAME
The AFL Commission has approved a reduction in the cap on interchange rotations for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, after a recommendation from the Laws of the Game Committee at the end of the 2015 season.

The use of the substitute player will be removed, returning to four interchange players, while the cap will be lowered to 90 rotations a match. Clubs will also be allowed any changes made at quarter breaks (up to 12 across the three breaks), while forced blood rule, head injury assessment and stretcher changes will not count as part of the rotations.

The interchange cap had been introduced for the 2014 season for an initial two-year trial, set at 120 rotations a match across three interchange players, with one player being used as a substitute in case of injury.

In 2016, the cap will continue to have any quarterly restrictions, with the use of the 90 interchange rotations a match to be managed as each club sees fit across the entirety of a game. It was the AFL view the interchange cap over the past two years had allowed clubs to transition back to 2010 levels of interchange numbers.

The AFL Commission approved a minor change to the Laws for 2015 whereby the umpires would be able to call for a score review if a goal umpire interfered with a scoring play.

Under the Law previously written, play-on was the correct call for any instance where the ball hits a goal umpire. This was altered to provide a common sense way of dealing with these rare situations by the umpires halting play and determining whether a goal umpire had prevented a certain score, with the wording allowing the goal and field umpire to determine what score they believe would have resulted had the ball not hit the goal umpire.

The Commission also approved several changes to interpretations around the Laws of the Game for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season:

Dangerous Tackles – Umpires will be giving a stricter adjudication of tackles with a lifting, slinging or rotating technique, while the MRP guidelines will enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact.

Protected Area – Size of the protected area around the mark to be increased.

Boundary Line Play – A stricter interpretation of deliberate out of bounds will be enforced.

Because of the historical deficiencies of the established concussion data, due to the definition requiring missed games, the AFL also has a separate ongoing concussion incidence project that overcomes this gap and includes all concussion cases from AFL matches whether a game was missed or not.

Results from this study between 2011-14 have shown consistent average concussion rates of 6-7 per club per year. Approximately 30 per cent of these incidents arise from Marking contests, contested ball and tackling, with the remaining 70 per cent from bumping. The incidents are evenly spread across the four quarters of a match.

The AFL further updated its concussion protocols with the introduction of the use of a sideline Head Injury Assessment Form, created in conjunction with experts and club doctors. The form provides greater clarity for club doctors to identify symptoms or conditions that automatically exclude a player from returning to a match such as:

- Loss of consciousness after a heavy hit or fall.
- Tonic posturing (player’s arm(s) stiffening after impact).
- An unprotected fall (where the player ‘rag-dolls’).
- The form also identifies symptoms or conditions that require further assessment to clear a player of concussion before returning to a match.

AFL INJURY SURVEY
The 2014 Injury Survey showed a substantially reduced injury incidence for the 2014 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, compared with the previous year, stating: “Season 2014 was a successful season in terms of injury outcomes, with lower injury incidence and prevalence than in recent years.”

There was also a reduced injury prevalence with a higher rate of players available to also play at state league level.

There was a lower incidence of serious AFL injuries in 2014, particularly early in the season, but a higher rate of foot stress...
fractures. There were ongoing lower rates of hamstring, quadriceps and groin injuries whereas calf injuries reduced in 2014 compared with the previous three seasons but were still higher than previous seasons. The injury incidence (number of new injuries per club per season) for 2014 was 36.1, a 13 per cent decrease from 2013. Injury prevalence was 146.0 missed games per season, an eight per cent decrease from 2013 and more in keeping with rates of the mid-late 2000s.

In 2014, the ‘average’ status of a club list of 45 players in any given week was: 35 players playing with 22 of them in the AFL, 7-8 missing through injury; and 2-3 missing due to other reasons (such as suspension, being used as a travelling emergency, team bye in a lower grade, etc).

DANGEROUS TACKLES

Through the 2015 season, the Football Operations Department formed a view that a stronger position needed to be taken on sling/dangerous tackles after two high-profile incidents in-season involving a Jay Schulz tackle on Ted Richards and a Bryce Gibbs tackle on Robbie Gray.

The tackles were adjudged differently by the game’s judiciary with only Gibbs being suspended and the MRG was then instructed to give greater consideration to the player being placed in a vulnerable position, particularly involving the pinning of the arms. A player retained the opportunity to defend his position at the Tribunal if he did not agree with the assessment of his action. Dangerous tackling techniques will be further discouraged in 2016 by paying free kicks for lifting, sinning, driving or rotating tackles with excessive force, and further penalising these actions via the Match Review Panel when they result in forcible high contact.

Regarding the Match Review Panel, a stricter adjudication of what constitutes a dangerous tackle is to be implemented. This includes an expansion of the current guidelines to consider forcible rotating tackles or situations where the player being tackled is in a vulnerable position (ie. arms pinned) with little opportunity to protect himself.

STADIUM SAFETY REVIEW

The AFL audited all its stadiums for player safety and conducted a full perimeter check of all venues after an issue involving Hawthorn’s Jarred Roughead in the match at ANZ Stadium against the Sydney Swans.

Roughead came into contact with bolts in the concrete in the drainage area next to the fence after sliding through the goal area during play. The AFL acknowledged this was not acceptable for the players in the match and its inspections of surrounds adjoining the playing surface were immediately upgraded at all venues across the competition.

PHIL WALSH

The tragic loss of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh required sensitivity and strong leadership from the Football Operations staff during a time of shock and grief for leadership from the Football Operations Department.

Faulkner required sensitivity and strong leadership from the Football Operations Department.

Faulkner required sensitivity and strong leadership from the Football Operations Department.
CLUB ACADEMIES – PLAYER DRAFT NOMINATIONS

A total of 25 players were nominated under the provisions of the Club Academies Rule as draft-eligible players for the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, held in Adelaide.

For a player to be included as a draft-eligible Club Academy Player for any of the Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants or Sydney Swans, the player must have represented either New South Wales or Queensland at any underage national football championships in that year or any other competition as determined by the AFL.

Brisbane Lions – Mabior Chol (Brisbane Lions Academy), Eric Hipwood (Aspley AFC), Ben Keays (Redlands), Corey Wagner (Aspley AFC), Nick Weller (University of Queensland AFC), Reuben William (Wilston Grange).

Gold Coast Suns – Dylmus Blanket, Robert Blood (Southport Sharks), Dyson Birdtrak (Labrador), Jesse Joyce (Palm Beach), Max Spencer (Palm Beach), Connor West (Labrador).

GWS Giants – Jock Cornell (Mangoplah-CLE), Nick Coughlan (Albury Tigers), Matthew Flynn (Narandera), Harrison Himmelberg (Mangoplah-CLE), Jacob Hopper (North Ballarat Rebels), Jack Irvine (Temora), Matthew Kennedy (Collingullie), Lachlan Tiziani (Albury).

Sydney Swans – Darcy Baron-Hay (North Shore), Lachlan Behagg (Marky Giants), Ryan Hebron (North-Shore), Callum Mills (Mosman Swans), Matthew Wilson (Mernda).

A total of 13 players were subsequently taken at either the NAB AFL Draft or NAB AFL Rookie Draft – Mabior Chol, Eric Hipwood, Ben Keays, Corey Wagner, Reuben William, Callum Mills, Jacob Hopper, Matthew Kennedy, Harrison Himmelberg, Matthew Flynn, Jock Cornell, Nick Coughlan and Jesse Joyce.

UMPIRING DIVERSITY

Designed to increase the number of indigenous, multicultural and female umpires nationally, an Umpiring Diversity Advisory Council was formed in 2015. These academies introduced the life skills that high school students from diverse backgrounds can learn by being involved in umpiring. In addition, two talented multicultural umpires – Jai Lyons (NSW) and Luca Biscogni (QLD) – were selected to attend the umpiring development program at the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships.

A highlight of the year in umpiring diversity was the appointment of an all-female umpiring crew in a TAC Cup match for the first time.

COACH ACADEMY

The AFL invested significantly in coach education in 2015, starting with workshops nationally and the development of an online coach portal.

NATIONAL UMPIRING CURRICULUM

A National Umpiring Curriculum to aid community umpire coaches in developing and accrediting their umpires was developed with the assistance of State Umpiring Departments and AFL umpires. This new resource provides umpire coaches with coaching and training guides that are used to educate umpires to be the best they can be.

TALENT PROGRAMS

Talent Pathway umpires had the opportunity to be part of the Youth Girls National Championships in Mandurah (WA), the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships on the Gold Coast and the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships in Melbourne. Former AFL umpire Stuart Wens was appointed as the head coach at these championships to assist the fast-tracking of young talent, while umpires from the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships were appointed to the Toyota AFL Grand Final curtain-raiser match between the AFL Academy and the Allies under-18 team at the MCG.

Thomas Crutie (Vic), Aaron Langston (NSW), Alex Whetton (Qld) and Nathan Williamson (WA) graduated from the program that aims to develop Australia’s emerging officiating talent, while five state league umpires were invited to the Umpires’ Combine in October. South Australian Craig Fleeer was promoted on to the AFL field umpires list following the Combine.

NATIONAL UNIFORM SUPPLY PROGRAM

The AFL teamed with high performance apparel supplier BLK to launch the National Uniform Supply Program, with the goal of a standardised umpiring uniform. The aim is to have every umpire officiating a game in Australia to be wearing the green uniform worn by AFL umpires.

NAB AFL RISING STARS PROGRAM

The NAB AFL Rising Stars program identifies and recognises young players, providing a pathway: it comprises the following elements:

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

NAB AFL RISING STAR AWARD

Melbourne’s Jesse Hogan won the 2015 NAB AFL Rising Star award. The key forward polled 49 votes to win from Carlton’s Patrick Cripps (41) and West Coast’s Dom Sheed (27).

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

NAB AFL DRAFT

The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. The event was broadcast by Fox Sports, ABC Radio, 1116 SEN and FIVela. AFL.com.au again provided extensive coverage.

It was the 30th AFL National Draft and the second time the event has been held in Adelaide.

RISING SUPERSTAR

Talented Melbourne key forward Jesse Hogan was a worthy winner of the NAB AFL Rising Star award.
Michael Ablett and assistant coaches joining AFL Talent Football Manager

The AFL welcomed Brenton Sanderson as NAB AFL ACADEMY

Martha Football Club.

the Dandenong Stingrays and the Mount

selection. He was recruited by Carlton from

2015 NAB AFL DRAFT SELECTION (FIRST ROUND)

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Josh Schache
Jacob Hopper
Callum Ah Chee
Harry McKay
Wayne Milera
Charlie Curnow
Matthew Kennedy
13
14
Eric Hipwood
Daniel Rioli
Harrison Himmelberg
Tom Doedee
Ryan Burton
Brayden Fiorini
Kieran Lovell
David Cuningham

Vic Country Mount Martha/Dandenong Stingrays Carlton
Vic Country Seymour/Murray Bushrangers Brisbane Lions
NSW/NCT North Shore Swans Academy Sydney Swans
Vic Country Mooroopna/Murray Bushrangers Melbourne

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NAB AFL DRAFTS

2015 NAB AFL DRAFTS

Vic Country Winchelsea/Geelong Falcons Essendon
Vic Country Torquay/Geelong Falcons Carlton
Vic Metro South Morang/Northern Knights St Kilda

Victoria 35 12 47 42%
South Australia 11 5 16 14%
Western Australia 8 5 13 10.6%
NSW/NCT 6 5 11 9.0%
Queensland 4 1 11 9.0%
Tasmania 4 0 4 3.6%
NT 1 2 3 2.7%
Alternate sports 0 4 4 3.6%
International 0 3 3 2.7%
Total 69 43 112

International Players on AFL Lists in 2015

Primary List

Brisbane Pearce Hanley Ireland
Carlton Zach Tashy Ireland
Sydney Swans Mike Pyke Canada

Rookie List

Brisbane Clay Hanley Ireland
Carlton Clayton Sheahan Ireland
Collingwood Ciaran Byrne Ireland
Collingwood Mason Cox USA
Essendon Connie McKenna Ireland
Fremantle Sean Hayley Ireland
Geelong Padraig Lucey Ireland
Hawthorn Kurt Hautherley New Zealand
Hawthorn Shamaila Tafatupu New Zealand
Nhlybourn Eric Wallace USA
St Kilda Jason Holmes USA
Port Adelaide Daniel Pflynn Ireland
West Coast Paddy Brough Ireland

NAB AFL UNDER-16 CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2015 NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were played in Adelaide, the Gold Coast, Geelong, Perth and Melbourne from May 23 to July 2. Vic Country won Division 1 and Queensland won Division 2. Vic Country’s Josh Schache won the Lake Medal (Division 1 best and fairest) and Queensland’s Ben Keays won the Harrison Medal (Division 2 best and fairest).

NAB AFL DRAFT COMBINE

2015 AFL DRAFT Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne from October 8-11.

The best young players from throughout the country gathered for testing and interviews with club staff.

State Combines were conducted in Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth.

International Combines

International Combines were conducted in Wellington, the IMG Academy in Florida and Dublin under the direction of Michael Ablett and AFL International Talent Co-ordinator Tadhg Kelly. AFL club recruiting staff attended each Combine and 58 athletes were tested. In 2015, there were 20 players listed with AFL clubs.

NAB AFL UNDER-18 CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2015 NAB AFL Under-18 Championships were played in Holden in Wellington, the IMG Academy in Florida and Dublin under the direction of Michael Ablett and AFL International Talent Co-ordinator Tadhg Kelly. AFL club recruiting staff attended each Combine and 15 athletes were tested. In 2015, there were 20 players listed with AFL clubs.

New Zealand Hawks at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.

Jacob Wettling was awarded the Ben Mitchell Medal in Level 2 while Sam Powell-Pepper was awarded the Cameron Ling Medal in Level 1.

NAB AFL UNDER-16 CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2015 NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were held on the Gold Coast from July 4 to July 11. Vic Country won Division 1 and Queensland won Division 2. The Division 1 Kevin Sheehan medallist was Vic Metro’s Jack Higgins, while NSW/NCT’s Charlie Sparro was awarded the Division 2 Alan McLean Medal.

Victoria’s Albert Tadzhunski won the Division 1 best and fairest while Queensland’s Ben Keays won the Division 2 best and fairest.

2015 NAB AFL DRAFTS

When players came from

2015 NAB AFL DRAFTS

Vic Country and the Victorian Football League

NAB AFL DRAFT COMBINE

The 2015 NAB AFL Draft Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne from October 8-11.

The best young players from throughout the country gathered for testing and interviews with club staff.

NAB AFL UNDER-18 CHAMPIONSHIPS

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Club and AFL members received free entry to NAB Challenge matches and ticket prices for the Toyota AFL Finals Series were held at 2013 levels.

Season 2015 was all about the fans, with the AFL striving to improve the affordability of attending matches and enhancing the fan experience at games.

For the first time in more than 10 years, AFL and club members received free general admission entry into NAB Challenge matches in which their team was competing, while the price of base general admission tickets during the Toyota Premiership Season remained the same level as 2014.

Fans attending the Toyota AFL Finals Series and Grand Final were also greeted to ticket prices at the same level as 2013, after a price freeze for the second consecutive year.

NAB AFL Auskick celebrated 20 years, highlighting the important partnership with NAB and its continued support of the AFL’s talent pathway.

The AFL welcomed four new corporate partners in CrownBet, Woolworths, McDonald’s and 2XU to further strengthen the AFL’s ongoing development of commercial operations.

AFL club membership continued to break records by reaching a total of 836,136 members nationally, a growth of 3.93 per cent on 2014.

In season 2015, the Marketing and Research Insights team moved within the Commercial Operations team, ensuring greater integration across membership, ticketing and corporate partners. The Research Insights team undertook more than 60 projects, allowing fans, via the ‘Fan Focus’ panel, to influence future strategic directions of the AFL.
The AFL continued to enjoy partnerships with several domestic and international companies in 2015, including prominent new relationships with CrownBet, Woolworths, McDonald’s and 2XU.

The AFL would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following corporate partners in 2015:

**TOYOTA MOTOR CORPORATION AUSTRALIA**

The 2015 season marked Toyota Australia’s 11th year as the Premier Partner of the AFL. This enduring relationship is one of the most successful in Australian sport and includes naming rights to the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, Toyota AFL Finals Series, Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade and Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Toyota’s passion for football inspires it to continue supporting grassroots clubs through the Toyota Good for Footy Program, celebrate the greats with the Legendary Moments campaign and deliver the excitement of “Big September” to regional fans through the Retiring Legends Lap of Honour, which culminated with retired Port Adelaide star Kane Cornes escorting the premiership cup on to the MCG at the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Toyota continued to bring its AFL partnership to life across a wide array of activations and initiatives, including:
- Toyota Legendary Moments is one of the longest-running and most-loved advertising campaigns in Australian sport. This year Toyota took legends to new heights, recreating Michael Long’s unforgettable dash down the wing in the ’93 Grand Final in style with the help of Steve Currie and Dave Lawson and a vintage bi-plane.
- Toyota launched the Good for Footy Raffle to make it easy for clubs to raise money to grow the future of the game. Toyota donated three new cars to the prize pool and clubs got to keep 100 per cent of the proceeds from every ticket sold. A total of 249 clubs across Australia registered, raising more than $387,000. This builds on the
The Retiring Legends Lap of Honour

The Retiring Legends Lap of Honour was conducted across Victoria to identify the best young kicking talent for the Pro Kick Academy, Pro Kick Australia. Trials were conducted across Victoria to identify a pool of 28 top kickers. The three biggest punters of the year kicked for the major prize at quarter-time of the AFL Grand Final. The winner, Dane Roy, kicked a total of 73m. A landing page was created on AFL.com.au featuring weekly results, photos and highlights videos, and AFL Media’s social channels provided support for Carlton-Draught Barrel Time throughout the season, with more than 1.5 million impressions delivered across Facebook.

Carlton Draught Friday Front Bar was a major highlight in brand-funded digital content for AFL Media and CUB in 2015. Filmed at the All Nations Hotel in Richmond, episodes were released each Friday during the home and away season and averaged more than 7,000 views across AFL’s digital platforms. The series culminated with a Grand Final episode filmed at the General Assembly at South Wharf, with more than 140 people attending.

The popular Carlton Draught Grand Final Front Bar returned in 2015 and was relocated within the newly developed Foxtel Footy Festival precinct in Yarra Park outside the MCG. Carlton Draught ran the event in partnership with the AFL this year and more than 2500 guests were given the opportunity to enjoy this private hospitality environment.

The Foxtel Footy Festival also welcomed the Strongbow Cider Garden, formed as part of the newly created Taste of Football experience within the precinct. The Strongbow Cider Garden was open from Wednesday, September 30 to Saturday, October 3, with more than 250,000 AFL fans visiting the Foxtel Footy Festival precinct over four days and nights.

Coca-Cola

As the official soft drink partner of the AFL, Coca-Cola worked closely with the AFL to utilise and maximise available assets throughout the season. This included digital media opportunities, ticketing and hospitality, promotions and money-can’t-buy experiences with a particular focus on the Toyota AFL Finals Series.

To celebrate the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season launch, Coca-Cola and the AFL worked on a successful promotion across Caltex stores nationally that saw winners being treated to the Ultimate MCBL AFL Experience with their chosen team. The AFL and its clubs supported the promotion via their Facebook posts which greatly contributed to the success of the campaign. On Grand Final Day, Coke Rewards members and a select group of lucky customers were also provided with the opportunity to walk on the MCG to watch the teams warm up.

The AFL community is grateful for the ongoing support of Coca-Cola South Pacific and Coca-Cola Amatil as highly valued corporate partners.

National Australia Bank

The NAB Challenge heralded the return of AFL in 2015 and saw the game taken to iconic regional and suburban football grounds across Australia, with 27 games in 16 days.

Matches were played at historic AFL venues including Whitten Oval, the home of football in western metropolitan Melbourne, as well as non-traditional venues and communities not usually exposed to elite AFL matches such as Moreton Bay in Queensland, Mandurah in Western Australia and Port Lincoln in South Australia.

In total, 207,489 AFL fans attended NAB Challenge games, with the average attendance at regional games up 34 per cent year-on-year.

AFL fans were also watching games on television and online, with 1,768,424 people tuning into games on Fox Footy and 112,352 fans watching via the AFL Live App online.

The cumulative viewership total was 1,880,776, up one per cent year-on-year. There were 32 NAB Supergoals kicked with 250,000 AFL fans visiting the Foxtel Footy Festival precinct over four days and nights.

The NAB AFL Rising Star function held at Crown Palladium saw Melbourne forward Jesse Hogan crowned the winner with 49 out of a possible 50 votes. Carlton’s Patrick Cripps finished second with 41 votes.

The 2015 NAB AFL Draft Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne between Thursday, October 8, and Sunday, October 11. In total, 85 potential draftees underwent medical and physical testing. West Australian midfielder Josh Schoenfeld capped off a strong week at the Combine by setting a record around the 3km time trial, running the distance in 9min 15sec to eclipse the record set by Sydney Swans academy player Jack Hiscott last year (9min 11sec).

With big names moving AFL clubs, there was no shortage of interest in the NAB AFL Trade Period. AFL.com.au provided extensive coverage across all Territory, Queensland and Tasmania who were eligible for the 2015 NAB AFL Draft. The NAB AFL Rising Star function held at Crown Palladium saw Melbourne forward Jesse Hogan crowned the winner with 49 out of a possible 50 votes. Carlton’s Patrick Cripps finished second with 41 votes.

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The Gatorade Match Day Moments program ran throughout the year and encouraged and rewarded clubs for correct utilisation of Gatorade equipment and products in both match-day and training environments. In addition to the strong branding via the use of equipment on the field of play, Gatorade also secured signage rights for interchange benches at Etihad Stadium, Adelaide Oval,Gabba, Metricon Stadium, SCG, Spotless Stadium, Simonds Stadium, Domain Stadium and the Melbourne Cricket Ground.


All ambassadors were engaged to drive the promotion of the partnership and provide links to teams within the three key states of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

Hannebery and Parker were hosted during the pre-season at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute in Florida along with Joel Selwood and Tom Hawkins from Geelong, where the players gained access to the facilities and best sports science testing in the world.

Gatorade also utilised footage and imagery of its ambassadors for use on pack, in promotions and in television commercials.

Gatorade ran several promotions via its key customer channels to drive volume and promote awareness of the official partnership with the AFL. The main marketing campaign focused on ‘fuelling the future’, which included a television commercial featuring upcoming AFL players from the NAB AFL Academy program and current AFL stars Ablett and Pendlebury.

In addition to the promotional activity, Gatorade brought global ambassador and Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton to Australia for a week of immersion with Richmond.

Gatorade accompanied the International Rules team to New York at the end of the season where six players underwent GSS testing before the International Rules training camp as part of a launch of customised hydration.

All 18 AFL clubs provided Gatorade with a number of player appearances and written testimonials regarding their experience with Gatorade.

The Gatorade experience the best of the ‘away game’ destinations and enjoy match tickets, lounge access and match-day guarantee.

The AFL Golden Passport campaign was launched alongside the launch of AFL Travel to celebrate AFL’s biggest footy fans. Across the year there was a strong focus on building awareness of the new branding and improved product of ferrying.

As well as building on the AFL Travel database of 600,000-plus subscribers, there was also a big focus on club-specific creative utilising geo-targeted and audience-targeted display activity across the AFL and assets to provide tailored messages. The 2015 campaigns utilised club and AFL databases, reaching more than 600,000 AFL supporters and fans.

The partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia – the AFL’s official airline since 2011 – flourished in 2015. Virgin Australia successfully leveraged this integrated partnership through a number of activities.

The 2015 Virgin Australia Grand Final entertainment saw two of the world’s biggest recording artists – Bryan Adams and Ellie Goulding – provide pre- and post-match entertainment for fans. The acts received extensive media coverage in the lead-up to and post the Grand Final, through social and traditional channels.

The fly-over which saw a Virgin Australia aircraft fly across the MCG was also amplified in 2015 with the aircraft continuing a flight path that resembled the outline of the Premiership Cup. The flight path was shared on Virgin Australia and AFL social channels and quickly became a viral sensation with a reach of more than 1.5 million.

As the most sought-after party during Grand Final week, the Virgin Australia Grand Final Party was back again. More than 800 guests came together at Melbourne’s newly renovated venue Alumbra.

Stars of the AFL, along with a number of celebrities and influences from around the world, were among the guests who enjoyed this year’s theme of ‘beyond your imagination’, with guests treated to world-class cuisine and entertainment inspired by the Middle East.

It was the second year as the naming rights partner of the All-Australian Awards.

The 2015 Virgin Australia International Rules Test was played at Croke Park in Dublin. The Australian team made up exclusively of past and present All-Australian players also attended a pre-match training camp in New York.

To coincide with the Toyota AFL Finals Series, Virgin Australia launched a new national television advertising campaign to promote ‘The Business’, the new business class offering on board Virgin Australia’s A330 aircraft. Highlighting Virgin Australia’s partnership with the AFL, the series of four commercials centred around four of the leading coaches in the game - Adam Simpson (West Coast Eagles), Ross Lyon (Fremantle), John Longmire (Sydney Swans) and Damien Hardwick (Richmond).

The AFL’s innovative Any Game Anywhere travel platform was relaunched as AFL Travel – enabling AFL fans to experience the best of the ‘away game’ destinations and enjoy match tickets, lounge access and match-day guarantee.

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AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

MCC AND ITS SURROUNDS

Throughout the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series and 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final, more than 17,000 corporate guests were entertained at AFL events at venues such as the MCG and its surrounds, Domain Stadium, ANZ Stadium, Crown Palladium as the MCG and its surrounds, Domain Stadium, ANZ Stadium, Crown Palladium and the Royal Exhibition Building.

The event was a celebration of all things football with children’s activities, player and celebrity appearances, music and food. It also included the LifeStyle Taste of Football curated by Vue de monde chef Shannon Bennett, Presto Movies at the MCG, the Music Hub featuring the Antipodean Rock ‘n’ Roll Collective, the Carlton Draught Grand Final Front Bar and the Interchange.

In changing the traditional route to the site over four days, more than 1850 corporate guests, with the hospitality precinct again with a more intimate and premium experience, as well as enjoying reserved seating at the Toyota AFL Grand Final. More than 3700 guests attended Centre Square precinct at Birrarung Marr underwent a significant facelift, with a more intimate and premium environment delivered for attendees. More than 3700 guests attended Centre Square across the Friday and Saturday and were treated to a high-quality hospitality experience, as well as enjoying reserved seating at the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

The Centre Square precinct at Birrarung Marr underwent a significant facelift, with a more intimate and premium environment delivered for attendees. More than 3700 guests attended Centre Square across the Friday and Saturday and were treated to a high-quality hospitality experience, as well as enjoying reserved seating at the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Those who attended the Final Siren post-game party were treated to Australian rock icon Diesel and other performers entertained guests late into the night. The September Club provided first-class service and atmosphere to guests, with the hospitality precinct again with a more intimate and premium experience, as well as enjoying reserved seating at the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

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AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Richmond
Collingwood
Port Adelaide
Essendon

-14.0%

SHINING BRIGHT the new-look Adelaide Oval.

fans attended matches at

A record average of 44,623

in the opening round, the third largest

83,493 for the Carlton-Richmond match

Year-on-year. The highlight was a crowd of

MCG recording a growth of three per cent

venues saw an increase in 2015, with the

8008. The 2015 AFL Grand Final was attended by 98,632 fans, slightly down on the 2014 match attendance of 99,454.

Access to AFL matches, NAB Challenge, Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Toyota AFL Finals Series, crowds were on par with the previous season.

A total of 6,351,578 spectators attended the 197 matches of the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, with average attendance per match on par with the previous season.

ATTENDANCES

With a focus on scheduling blockbuster matches in the traditional Saturday afternoon timeslot, all three Victorian venues saw an increase in 2015, with the MCG recording a growth of three per cent year-on-year. The highlight was a crowd of 83,693 for the Carlton-Richmond match in the opening round, the third largest attendance for a round one match in AFL history.

This growth was offset by drops of 9.6 per cent at ANZ Stadium, 4.7 per cent at the Gabba and 23.2 per cent at Metricon Stadium.

With an improved on-field showing, the top five clubs in terms of average attendances compared with 2014.

GWS Giants recorded the biggest increase in home game attendances, averaging 10,786 fans in 2015, compared with 9,206 in the previous season — representing a year-on-year increase of 16.9 per cent.

It was a record-setting year for attendances at Adelaide Oval, with the Showdown in round 16 recording the biggest crowd for an AFL match in South Australia. The two highest attendances seen at Blundstone Arena in Hobart were also recorded with 9,206 in round six and 9,226 in round 20.

Across the nine matches of the 2015 AFL Finals Series, crowds were down 8.9 per cent on 2014 with a total attendance of 519,008.

Across all AFL matches, NAB Challenge 2015 had 76% of 2014's attendance of 99,454.

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The top five clubs in terms of average attendances compared with 2014.

The AFL ensured ticket prices remained affordable while simplifying the ticket-buying process with the base general admission ticket prices remaining the same as 2014.

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The AFL removed the use of multiple configurations at the MCG and Etihad Stadium venues, with user-friendly maps implemented. The ticket-pricing strategy across the League delivered the best experience at the best value for members and fans, while elevating revenue and attendance for clubs.

For the second consecutive year, ticket prices for the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series, including the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final, were frozen, remaining unchanged from the previous year’s prices. This was only the second time in nearly two decades that prices did not increase to attend the Grand Final.
CONSUMER PRODUCTS

The Consumer Products program continued to perform strongly in 2015, with growth in on-field, gift and novelty and supporter apparel. The on-field program continued to expand, particularly for guernseys, with the injection of nine clubs producing Anzac themed guernseys to expand, particularly for guernseys, with the injection of nine clubs producing Anzac themed guernseys. Guernseys worn by players on the field, gift and novelty and supporter apparel were retailed and auctioned with strong results. The game’s history.

Port Adelaide, the Sydney Swans and the Western Bulldogs recorded double-digit growth and all but three clubs – the Adelaide Crows, Carlton and Collingwood – recording increases on their 2014 membership figures.

The Sydney Swans have led the clubs in membership growth with a 21.7 per cent rise thanks to a highly successful junior membership engagement program. The Western Bulldogs were second with an 11.68 per cent increase to 35,222 members and Port Adelaide continued its growth after its move to Adelaide Oval with membership growing to 14,219 members. (36 per cent) in just two seasons.

Collingwood continues to be the largest-supported club in the competition with a total membership of 75,037, heading a list of eight clubs exceeding 50,000. With the introduction of the Footy Festival, the Consumer Products division ran three major activations at the event, including the Women’s AFL Style Lounge, with the key objective to increase the awareness of women’s club merchandise. The second was a ShopAFL pop-up retail outlet selling a wide range of the 18 clubs’ merchandise through a collaboration with retail partner Infinite Retail. There was a Penguin reading corner placed within the wider Kids Zone.

BEST OF BUDDIES

PLAYCORP

AFL club membership continued to break records, reaching a total of 836,136 members nationally. This is a growth of 31,656 members (3.93 per cent) from 2014 and again the highest recorded figure in the game’s history.

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AFL Membership posted strong results again in 2015, with a total of 55,301 members. This represented a slight decrease of 2.26 per cent on 2014. AFL members. This represented a slight decrease of 2.26 per cent on 2014. AFL

AFL MEMBERSHIP

AFL Membership is made up of 31,017 Full members, 20,469 Silver members and 3,815 Absentee members. With 49,239 members, 20,469 Silver members and 3,815 Absentee members. With 49,239

CLUB MEMBERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>% Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>35,953</td>
<td>35,911</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Melbourne*</td>
<td>49,092</td>
<td>47,928</td>
<td>1164</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Adelaide*</td>
<td>54,067</td>
<td>52,968</td>
<td>1099</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond*</td>
<td>70,829</td>
<td>67,850</td>
<td>3039</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>32,746</td>
<td>30,739</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Swans*</td>
<td>48,813</td>
<td>46,943</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast Eagles*</td>
<td>65,231</td>
<td>58,529</td>
<td>6692</td>
<td>11.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Bulldogs*</td>
<td>54,272</td>
<td>48,968</td>
<td>5304</td>
<td>10.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>836,136</td>
<td>804,480</td>
<td>31,656</td>
<td>3.93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Record

With the introduction of the Footy Festival, the Consumer Products division ran three major activations at the event, including the Women’s AFL Style Lounge, with the key objective to increase the awareness of women’s club merchandise. The second was a ShopAFL pop-up retail outlet selling a wide range of the 18 clubs’ merchandise through a collaboration with retail partner Infinite Retail. There was a Penguin reading corner placed within the wider Kids Zone.

PLAYCORP

The AFL’s major supporter apparel partner launched a new program focused on traditional 100 per cent wool knit guernseys, produced in conjunction with Australian Wool Innovations. The marketing and promotion surrounding the program was high, including television, radio, print and billboards and player ambassadorships and achieved media coverage valued at just under $2 million across all platforms. Since its launch in May 2014, ShopAFL has continued to grow. Comparing year-on-year statistics for the six-month period between June and October, online sales increased by 80 per cent. The number of orders and the quantity of units sold has seen a 50 per cent uplift. Unique site visits have grown by 20 per cent and conversion rates are up by 30 per cent.

The merchandise operations model at Etihad Stadium changed for the 2015 season, with the rights awarded to the tenant clubs. The AFL Consumer Products department, together with Infinite Retail, worked alongside the clubs to ensure the merchandise offer was maximised and the fan experience improved from previous years.

AFL Stores also continued to deliver solid results across its 12-store footprint as well as its ecommerce site.
MARKETING & RESEARCH INSIGHTS

MARKETING

The 2015 marketing strategy followed a business-wide focus on the fans and their positive results in brand health, reputation, and attendance.

- From NAB AFL Auskick to community footy, to the growing number of women playing the game and the passionate supporters who create the unique atmosphere at an AFL game, the AFL’s 2015 marketing campaign focused on the fans.

- The You Make The Game campaign was well received by fans and non-fans alike, with strong likability and increases in consideration to attend.

- The Sunday Funday campaign was launched to provide a targeted family product with fans excited by the return of kick-to-kick and strong feedback on ‘kids in free’ which saw a doubling of kids general admission attendances in Melbourne.

- Australian media personality Mick Molloy was chosen to bring the campaign to life.

- The season culminated with the All for the Finals campaign – a way for the AFL to acknowledge and celebrate the sacrifices and commitment our players (and fans) go to in order to get to the last month of the season and communicating that the AFL Finals is the premium sporting event of the year.

- Key highlights of the campaign included an increased focus on unique digital content, with club finals vignettes receiving more than three million views through the partnership with Facebook.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

The AFL’s in-house research team undertook more than 60 projects in 2015. The ‘Fan Focus’ panel includes more than 11,000 fans, which ensures supporters have a voice in providing direct insights into the AFL’s strategic direction.

- Results from this research helped inform a number of fan-centric initiatives such as a focus on increased affordability at matches, a fan-friendly fixture to encourage strong attendance and a number of other fan initiatives, including Sunday Funday where children were admitted for free to games in Melbourne.
The AFL’s Game and Market Development Team is responsible for growing and developing Australian Football and striving to ensure our sport is a way of life for every community.

In 2015, the AFL initiated a comprehensive review of Australian Football in the community to identify key areas of need for future investment and a future vision for success. The ‘Future Directions of Australian Football’ project consulted a broad range of volunteers, administrators and leaders across AFL clubs, state and territory bodies, community leagues and clubs, schools and other subject matter experts.

The report outlines recommendations for the short, medium and long term, with the objective of ensuring Australian Football is representative and inclusive, well supported and sustainable, has strong links between community and elite competitions and is a national code responsive to local needs with first-class competitions at every level.

Along with the review, 2015 also saw a restructure of the Game and Market Development Department with Simon Lethlean transitioning from the General Manager of Broadcasting, Scheduling and Major Projects portfolio to lead this area of the business.

TRUE GRIT
Geelong captain Joel Selwood again led from the front in a challenging season for the Cats, who missed the Finals for the first time since 2006.
### Total Participation

Total participation grew to 1,247,575 nationally, representing an eight per cent rise on 2014 figures.

An additional 2,013,172 people were engaged through school or community-based clinics and promotions, which is a growth of 33 per cent from 1.5 million in 2014.

#### 2015 Highlights

The eight per cent increase in participation included the following highlights:

- 597,538 played in structured competitions (up 3.5 per cent).
- 650,072 participated in introductory programs (up 13 per cent).
- Strong growth in junior (four per cent) and youth girls (13 per cent) football.
- There are 253 leagues, 2,267 clubs and 13,873 community club teams nationally – with 226 new teams taking the field in 2015.
- A total of 239,980 students played in school competitions, with another 467,105 involved in introductory programs, representing an increase of 13 per cent.
- 8.3 per cent growth in primary-aged inter-school football competitions.
- 1.3 per cent growth in secondary inter-school football.
- 172 per cent growth in school program participation.

NAB AFL Auskick participation grew by 2.5 per cent to 182,927.

A total of 22,286 people played in a McDonald’s AFL 9s competition on the back of 23.5 per cent growth.

Female participation has reached 318,880.

Female participation makes up 25 per cent of all participation (up from 19 per cent in 2014).

163 new female teams were established in 2015.

#### NAB AFL Auskick

The NAB AFL Auskick program continues to provide an introduction to Australian Football for our youngest participants and their families. A total of 182,927 children participated in the program in 2015 at 2936 centres around the country.

In addition, more than 23,500 NAB AFL Auskick participants had the experience of a lifetime by playing at an official AFL venue on game-day as part of the grid game program.

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

It is through their passion and commitment that NAB AFL Auskick continues to thrive.

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

During the first weekend of the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series, seven NAB AFL Auskick volunteers – Stephen Ryan (NSW/ACT), Brett Fragiacomo (NT), Jon Breeden (Qld), Mark Dahltz (SA), Glenn Johnstone (Tas), David Wolf (Vic) and Marcus McArthur (WA) – were rewarded by NAB with a trip to Melbourne and a money-can’t-buy AFL experience. Each winner (and a guest) was treated to an exclusive workshop at AFL House and was a VIP guest at the AFL official function for the first elimination final between the Western Bulldogs and Adelaide. Each of these seven deserving winners was selected for their outstanding contribution to their local NAB AFL Auskick centre.

Twenty-two NAB AFL Auskicker of the Year nominees also took centre-stage during Grand Final week. The nominees attended a dinner at the MCG, walked in the parade, played on the MCG at half-time of the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final and presented the premiership medals.

Will Le Deux from the Nagambie NAB AFL Auskick centre was named the 2015 NAB AFL Auskicker of the Year.

The AFL would like to thank all the volunteers, participants and families who make the program what it is and also acknowledges our program.

#### Game and Market Development

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

**SCHOOLS**

A critical component of our participant engagement strategy is to enhance our presence in primary and secondary schools across Australia to provide opportunities for all students wishing to participate in Australian Football. The continued growth in Australian Football participation has been due to a number of initiatives, programs and resources designed specifically to improve our presence in the classroom and the school physical education/sport program. A total of 706,285 students participated in either inter-school competitions or school-based programs greater than six weeks in duration – an overall increase of 13 per cent.

**INTER-SCHOOL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS (MALE & FEMALE)**

In 2015, there were 10,799 inter-school teams in AFL competitions that involved some 231,180 students. The table right shows a selection of winners of various school competitions in 2015.

**OTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Intra-school AFL programs** continued to grow with 462,005 students participating.
- **Promotional clinics and visits** reached just over two million children (1.54 million at schools and more than 686,000 at community venues).
- **The Woolworths AFL School Ambassador program** provided training and offered the necessary support for teachers who strongly promote Australian Football. Fifteen teachers, among the 5,500 who were involved in the program, were named 2015 Woolworths AFL School Ambassadors of the Year for their outstanding service to the game.
- **The AFL Learning Management System (LMS)** provided educators with innovative resources to enhance education outcomes and help engage students in unique and meaningful ways.
- **More than 2000 teachers attended specific AFL Professional Development or information sessions and seminars, with the AFL assisting in covering the teacher relief costs for those who attended.**
- **The Woolworths AFL Schools Grants Scheme** provided schools with the opportunity to apply for subsidies to buy major capital items such as permanent goalposts, goalpost padding, playing guernseys and sports kits. In 2015, financial assistance saw:
  - 44 schools buy permanent goalposts.
- **37 schools buy sets of goalpost padding.**
- **72 schools buy playing guernseys.**
- **28 schools buy AFL 9s kits.**
- **6000 AFL footballs distributed to schools.**
- **The AFL Sports Fantasy Classic and AFL Schools Tipping Competition involved more than 35,000 participants.**
- **More than 2000 students were involved in a national online AFL-themed quiz which focused on numeracy and literacy.**

**INTER-SCHOOL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETITION</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>STATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFL/VIC Herald Sun Shield Boys Div 1</td>
<td>St Patrick’s – Ballarat</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFL/VIC Herald Sun Shield Boys Div 2</td>
<td>St Joseph’s College</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFL/VIC Herald Sun Girls Competition Div 1</td>
<td>Methodist Ladies’ College</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFL/VIC Herald Sun Girls Competition Div 2</td>
<td>Aquinas College</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFL/VIC Herald Sun Country Cup</td>
<td>Central Vic: AFL Goldfields – Barmera College, AFL Gippsland – Bairnsdale Secondary College, AFL Goulburn Murray &amp; North East Border – St Mary’s of the Angels, Nathalia Northern Victoria – St Joseph’s College, Echuca Western District – Morowa College</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Sport Victoria Premier League</td>
<td>Ballarat Clarendon College</td>
<td>VIC</td>
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<td>AIL Abilities State Final</td>
<td>Essendon Keilor College</td>
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<td>QUILT 100 Cup</td>
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<td>Pink Power Challenge</td>
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<td>Defence Force Cup</td>
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<td>Free Dockers Schoolgirls Cup – Moore Division</td>
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<td>Free Dockers Schoolgirls Cup – White Division</td>
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<td>PSA – Alex Cup</td>
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<td>SASFA Premiers Cup</td>
<td>Highgate Primary School</td>
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<td>SAAS Messenger Shield</td>
<td>Prince Alfred College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide Open Boys A Schools Knockout Cup</td>
<td>Sacred Heart College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Boys Knockout Competition</td>
<td>Sacred Heart College</td>
<td>SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queensland Independent Schools Cup – Open Boys Division</td>
<td>Padua College</td>
<td>QLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queensland Independent Schools Cup – Year 9/10 Boys Division</td>
<td>St Laurence’s College</td>
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<td>Palm Beach Currumbin State High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools of Excellence Cup Junior Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brisbane Lions Cup Senior Girls Female</td>
<td>Mountain Creek State High School</td>
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<td>Paul Kelly Cup – Boys</td>
<td>Merchrilla Primary School</td>
<td>NSW/ACT</td>
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<td>Paul Kelly Cup – Girls</td>
<td>Holy Family Primary School, Katoomba</td>
<td>NSW/ACT</td>
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<tr>
<td>U/16 Boys Independent Schools Competition</td>
<td>St Mary’s College</td>
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<td>Open Independent Schools Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern High Schools and Tassie Hawks Cup</td>
<td>New Town High School</td>
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<td>NWPL North West Tasmania</td>
<td>Latrobe High School</td>
<td>TAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHSCA Northern Tasmania competition</td>
<td>Kings Meadows High School</td>
<td>TAS</td>
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AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

COACHING DEVELOPMENT

The 2015 AFL Census shows that about 27,000 coaches delivered football programs to participants in all segments of the game in 2015. NewCoachingOnline.com.au became the fifth Hawthorn assistant under Alastair Clarkson to take on a senior role at another club.

In partnership with Victorian DEECD, the AFL ran the One Team, One Goal – Celebrating Diversity school competition for primary and secondary school students to promote positive discussion and awareness in schools regarding diversity, intercultural understanding and respect. More than 200 entries were received from 50 schools around Victoria. St Peter’s & Paul Primary School won the primary school section and Point Cook Senior High School was named the secondary school section winner.

More than 25,000 children were introduced to Australian Football through the AFL Sporting Schools Program, an initiative established and funded by the Australian Sports Commission to help engage primary school-aged children in sporting activities.

ACREDITATION COURSES

Attendance at AFL coach accreditation courses continues to ensure there is an adequate supply of accredited coaches to meet needs and support growth of the game. In 2015, more than 7000 coaches participated in courses – 6984 at Level 1, 304 at Level 2 and 26 at Level 3. Since 2001, the AFL, in partnership with the AFL Players Association, has been conducting a specific Level 2 Coaching Course for experienced and recently retired players who are interested in coaching. Many of these players complete their accreditation and go on to develop as assistant coaching roles in AFL and state league clubs and a few, after also completing their AFL High Performance Coach Accreditation, have filtered through to become AFL senior coaches in recent years. The 2015 course was conducted in Melbourne in January for 28 current players and coaches.

The AFL High Performance Coaching Course was reviewed during the year with industry partners, including the state coaching managers, the AFL Coaches’ Association and AFL clubs. Changes to the structure, content and delivery were made in accordance with industry recommendations. The course is now delivered through two separate face-to-face segments of four and two days, online content, workplace learning and coach mentoring. The first segment of the 2015–16 course was conducted for 25 invited coaches at Etihad Stadium in October, with the second segment planned for January 2016.

AFL ONLINE COACHING COURSES

There has been outstanding uptake of the AFL Online Junior and the newly developed AFL Online Youth and Senior Coaching Courses in 2015, with 5500 coaches completing the courses through the year. These courses are integral parts of the AFL Level 1 coaching accreditation programs.

INTERNATIONAL COURSES

AFL International affiliates continued to be active in coach development in 2015, with a number of courses conducted in other countries, including Fiji, Europe and the USA. The Fiji course, part of regular AFL development activity in the South Pacific, produced 30 accredited coaches. USAFL president and coaching director Dennis Ryan conducted the first US Level 2 course through a series of Google webinars over six weekly sessions. Ten coaches completed their Level 2 accreditation in this course. AFL Europe is also in the process of conducting a Level 1 course, which started with a seminar provided by visiting members of the AFLCA in London in October – these coaches will continue their learning through the AFL online courses and will complete their practical components during the AFL UK pre-season period.

CLUB COACHING COORDINATOR PROGRAM

The role of the club coaching coordinator is growing in importance to ensuring football at all levels is delivered with improved quality, in inclusive environments. Following the implementation of the Club Coaching Coordinator Program in late 2014 and distribution of the associated resources, a number of courses were conducted in 2015 in different states. This program has been established to enhance the development of coaches at community league and club level and provide them with elements of on-going support.

TALENT IDENTIFICATION COURSES

The AFL Level 1 course in identifying Talent for AFL, was reviewed in 2015 and will be delivered in all states in 2016. The continuing development of female football in culturally diverse communities is providing a rich pool for attracting players and identifying talent in the game.

AFL NATIONAL COACHING CONFERENCE

The 2015 AFL National Coaching Conference (13th edition) was conducted at Etihad Stadium from January 31 to February 2 and featured a keynote address from Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson. Other presenters at the conference, which attracted more than 400 coaches, were Leigh Russell, Brendan Bolton, Louise Burke, Shane Pill, Matt Jones, Mark Yettica-Paulson and David Parkinson. Thirty-two breakout sessions on a wide range of football and coaching topics were delivered across the weekend. The 2016 edition of the conference will be conducted in Perth in February 2016.

COACHING SUPPORT, RESOURCES & AFL COMMUNITY WEBSITE

Ongoing post-accreditation support for accredited coaches is provided through the coaching section of the AFL Community Website.

MESSAGE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION

(AAC-funded, non-Winning Edge sports)

The past year has seen considerable success and progress for Australian sport, as the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and national sporting organisations (NSOs) continue to build on our nation’s proud sporting tradition. The Government’s 2014-15 investment of nearly $120 million into Australian sport continues to be refined to ensure funding is aligned to sports with the greatest potential to contribute to Australia’s Winning Edge 2012-22 targets and drive greater participation outcomes for sport.

The sporting landscape has changed rapidly in recent years, as have the options for people’s scarce leisure time. More than ever before, sport faces tough competition for our attention from electronic media and other sedentary pursuits.

In March, the Commission launched PlaySport Australia – our plan to help NSOs build participation in sport and make sure all Australians enjoy its benefits. Sports have the opportunity to attract more than 4.5 million Australians into their communities. It’s important that we work together to ensure that more Australians, particularly young Australians, participate in sport more often and that we have strong sporting organisations that deliver the products and opportunities Australians want.

Other highlights in 2014-15 included:

> The transition to Sporting Schools and the development of its website – the main portal for sporting organisations, schools, coaches and parents to access this $100 million program which aims to reach more than 850,000 children.

> The development of the AusPlay survey – the ASC has committed to introducing a new national survey to better understand how Australians engage with and play sport. Good decisions require good data and this initiative by the ASC is critical.

And through Australia’s Winning Edge, we will continue to give our athletes the best chances at international success.

So now, more than ever, we have a clear plan to make sure all Australians enjoy sport and maximise our chances of success. On behalf of the ASC, I thank you for your hard work in helping us achieve these goals and I look forward to working with you into the future.

John Wylie AM
Chair – Australian Sports Commission

Australian Sports Commission

AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

GAME AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT
New articles and practice activities are regularly published and promoted through the fortnightly AFL Community newsletters sent to more than 60,000 recipients. This continues to be a relevant source of coaching information for coaches at all levels.

INJURY PREVENTION RESOURCES
An important set of injury prevention and management resources were produced in 2015, including incorporation of the key guidelines for the management of concussion in community football into the AFL coaching manuals and regularly promoted to community football organisations and clubs.

Following the completion of a research project through the AFL Research Board (the FoootyFirst Training Program to Prevent Leg Injuries), that project will now be promoted throughout 2016.

These prevention programs and related resources will be prominently promoted in AFL coaching courses in future seasons. As well as being incorporated into the AFL coaching manuals, these resources are available for download from the AFL Community website or in hard copy from AFL and state affiliate offices.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS
AFL COACHING AMBASSADORS
AFL Coaching Ambassadors and course mentors Stan Alves and David Parkin continued in their valuable long-term roles in AFL coaching and development projects throughout the year, including presenting and facilitating at courses and seminars, mentoring coaches, reviewing programs and advocating for coaches and coach development.

They acted as facilitators and mentors at the AFL High Performance Course and, along with coaching consultants Neil Barras, Brendan Mason and David Wheeldon, regularly presented at Level 2 coaching courses around Australia.

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

These events, which are usually conducted by the state and regional branches of the Australian Football Coaches’ Association (AFCA), are a great celebration of the game and its people.

AFL COACHES’ ASSOCIATION – APPEARANCES PROGRAM
The partnership between the AFL and the AFL Coaches’ Association continued in 2015, particularly through the coach appearance program. Overall, AFL senior and assistant coaches participated in development activities and appearances in all states and territories, including most regions around the country. Association members made about 1000 appearances to help grow the game.

The AFL greatly appreciates the efforts of the AFCA and its individual coach members. Association staff, including CEO Mark Brayshaw and operational staff Greg Hutchison, Ron Watt and Melissa Murphy, also assisted in various elements of the AFL coaching development program during the year.

SOCIAL FOOTBALL PROGRAMS
McDONALD’S AFL 9s
It was the fourth season of the McDonald’s AFL 9s format, a social, non-contact, modified version of the game which is an ideal way to introduce new participants and re-engage lapsed participants.

With the support of state affiliates, 2015 again saw strong growth at a rate of 23.5 per cent, with 22,290 people now participating in competitions.

Partnering with McDonald’s as the official sponsor provided great support for AFL 9s and helped raise awareness for the format.

The game was showcased to more than 800,000 people at half-time of one match each round throughout the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Ex-Swans player Judge Bolton and his wife Lynette continued to fulfill roles as national program ambassadors to help raise greater awareness and exposure of the game.

Events in 2015 included the annual Byron Bay Carnival, the Domain Stadium Tournament in Perth and other corporate and community carnival events across the country.

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

In 2015, the AFL and AFL Victoria partnered with VicHealth’s Changing the Game. Increasing Female Participation in Sport initiative to use the AFL Active program to create new opportunities for female participation in physical activity across Victoria. This was launched in August at the 2015 AFL women’s exhibition match and television presenter Rebecca Maddern was named an AFL Active ambassador.

AFL Active also partnered with the Victorian Fitness Academy to recruit and run training sessions for accredited AFL Active trainers, with 42 now accredited and courses planned for 2016.

Pilot programs were held during term four in 2015 and all trainers will start running AFL Active sessions in line with the school terms in 2016.

COMMUNITY FOOTBALL
AFL NATIONAL INCLUSION CARNIVAL
The AFL’s National Inclusion Carnival brought together representative teams of footballers with intellectual disabilities from across the country to participate in a week-long round robin carnival in June.

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

This was the second time the national carnival had been staged and Victoria Metro took out the Peter Ryan Cup in the grand final at Punt Rd Oval against NSW/WACT.

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

AFL NATIONAL COMMUNITY CARNIVALS
The partnership between the AFL and AFL Victoria continued in 2015, with the National Community Carnival held at the Domain Stadium in July.

In total, more than 2000 people took part in the festivities, which included a number of events and entertainment for the local community.

AFL 9s was also held in Victoria, with more than 1000 people participating.

AFL COMMUNITY CLUB IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
The Swisse AFL Community Improvement Program was introduced to assist community clubs examine their off-field operations and identify areas for improvement, including strategic planning, culture, volunteer management, connection to community, communication, finance, governance, risk management, commercial fundraising/ sponsorship, facilities and event delivery.

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

In 2015:

- 275 clubs used the online assessment (963 complete).
- Four clubs demonstrated outstanding club administration and achieved gold quality club accreditation.
- 38 clubs demonstrated good club administration and received quality club accreditation.

The AFL would like to acknowledge the support of Swisse in assisting community clubs improve their off-field operations.

AFL COMMUNITY CLUB WEBSITE
With more than 13 million page views in 2015, the AFL Community website ( aflcommunity.com.au) continues to provide up-to-date information, training and advice for 70,000 coaches, umpires, players, club administrators and schools.

The AFL Community website provides:

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

AUSTRALIA POST AFL COMMUNITY CAMPS
The Australia Post AFL Community Camps saw more than 800 AFL players take the game to regional and rural communities across Australia, as well as overseas when St Kilda visited New Zealand in December.

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

Key outcomes from the 2015 Australia Post AFL Community Camps included:

- 562 primary and secondary schools visited.
- 95,058 school students visited.
- 6855 students visited at junior clubs.
- 8052 superclinic participants.
- 3760 people visited in aged care/hospitals.
- 3067 attended official functions.
- $66,700 raised during local community functions.
Volunteers
The Governor of Victoria, The Honourable Linda Dessau AM, and Judge Tony Howard hosted a morning reception at Government House on October 2 to recognise the contribution of Australian Football volunteers.

The reception, attended by 500 people, honoured state and territory Volunteers of the Year award recipients as well as the Victorian Multicultural Ambassador of the Year.

Guests acknowledged and celebrated the significant impact the volunteers had on their respective clubs, leagues and communities.

The function provided a unique and exclusive opportunity to thank all for their contributions and the day’s recognition illustrated our sincere gratitude.

The Governor presented the following awards:
- New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory Volunteer of the Year: Trevor Byrne
- Queensland Volunteer of the Year: Rob Munro
- South Australian Volunteer of the Year: Peter Shepard and Aleisha Shepard
- West Australian Volunteer of the Year: Rod Atherton
- Tasmanian Volunteer of the Year: Bill Trethewie
- Australian Capital Territory Volunteer of the Year: Jarrod Starkey
- Victorian Volunteer of the Year: Christine Swinburne
- Victorian Multicultural Ambassador of the Year: Rob Munro

In addition, the AFL Merit Awards continue to recognise two people from each state/territory who have made outstanding contributions to the game in their local league or club.

The AFL Community website also offers leagues and clubs the opportunity to personalise and download AFL volunteer-branded certificates which they can use to present to volunteers as recognition for their contribution to our game.

FootyWeb
The AFL’s Footyweb system continues to provide a high-quality service for competition management, data repository and a network of community league and club websites.

A National Registration System was introduced for players and umpires in 2014 and the past 12 months saw continued uptake and growth. In 2015, 384,000 players and umpires self-registered online via the National Registration System, an increase from the 210,000 in 2014.

Key stats in 2015:
- 597,000 registered participants (384,000 self-registered online)
- 14,000 online transfers and permits processed
- $20.5 million processed through the payment gateway

**North East Australian Football League**

The North East Australian Football League (NEAFL) continued to grow as an elite second-tier competition across the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Queensland in 2015. The fifth season of the competition was contested between 11 teams, comprising seven state league clubs and four AFL clubs. For the first time in the league’s short history, all teams played each other at least once throughout the regular home and away competition.

**FEMALE FOOTBALL**

The rapid growth of women and girls participating in Australian Football continued in 2015 with 318,880 now playing in competitions or involved in programs. A highlight was the 163 new female club teams established throughout the year. There are 629 female club teams established throughout Australia, which was watched by 345,000 people – a fantastic result.

In a first for women’s football, Channel Seven broadcast the second match live across Australia, which was watched by 345,000 people – a fantastic result. It is the third year of the women’s exhibition match, and extensive consultation and planning has begun to fast-track the development of the National Women’s League model for the 2017 season.

**FEMALE PARTICIPATION ACCOUNTS FOR 25 PER CENT OF OVERALL particiPATION AND IS ALREADY MEETING THE AFL’S 2020 TARGET.**

**UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY**

The provide of Government House were turned into a football field during a reception to recognise volunteers.

**FOOTYWEB**

The AFL’s database allows for a high-quality service for competition management, data repository and a network of community league and club websites.

**AFL WOMEN’S EXHIBITION SERIES**

Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs played two exhibition matches, both as curtain-raisers to AFL games in round eight and round 20.

Both matches were played at a high standard, were well attended and enjoyed strong media coverage.

Melbourne won the first match by eight points and West Australian Kara Donnellan was named best on ground. The Demons also prevailed in the second match by just four points and Melbourne captain Daisy Pearce was named best player.

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**STATE REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM**

Interstate matches replaced the traditional women’s national championships with the following results:
- NT Thunder hosted and lost to South Australia by four goals in a NEAFL double-header.
- Queensland was soundly beaten by Victoria as a double-header to the state ambassador.
- Western Australia prevailed over Victoria to win by four points for the first time before Fremantle v Richmond at Domain Stadium.
- WA/ACT lost to Queensland in a competitive match following a NEAFL match in Sydney.

**YOUTH GIRLS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The Western Australian Football Commission hosted the Youth Girls Nationals in Mandurah in May.

In Division 1, a strong Vic Metro side defeated Queensland by seven points. Vic Metro captain Britt Bonnici was adjudged best on ground with Queensland’s Tayla Harris named Player of the Championships.

South Australia won its first Division 2 grand final with a thumping win over NSW/ACT. South Australia’s Jack Sarah Allan was named best on ground as well as Player of the Championships.

**100 YEARS OF WOMEN’S FOOTBALL**

The year also marked 100 years since females first played Australian Football. It was established through independent research that teams in Perth first played matches as charity fundraisers during World War I. The first recorded women’s league was established soon after in Kalgoorlie in 1921.

*To mark this historic occasion, memorabilia was collected by a dedicated group of volunteers and was displayed in the Battye Library of Western Australia for three months.*

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INDIGENOUS

INDIGENOUS ROUND & DREAMTIME AT THE ‘G

Indigenous culture and the contribution of Indigenous players are celebrated annually during the AFL's Indigenous Round.

The round was launched in Sydney and featured all 18 AFL clubs wearing jumpers with special Indigenous designs. The AFL and the 18 clubs continued their partnership with Recognise to promote the campaign to recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution.

The focal point of the round was again the Dreamtime at The ‘G game between Essendon and Richmond.

FLYING BOOMERANGS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

In 2015, the National Female KickStart Championships were held in Cairns in April with more than 150 under-15 Indigenous players representing their state or territory in a five-day football carnival.

Each team selected the best 25 Indigenous players from their state or territory camps based on football ability, leadership qualities, school attendance and community involvement.

Players also participated in off-field engagement and educational sessions focused on topics such as identity, pathways to excellence and reaching individual and team goals.

The KickStart Championships are also the pathway to the Flying Boomerangs.

The championships held in Darwin included education sessions on topics such as pathway to excellence and identity. Twenty-five of the best-performing participants will represent the Woomeras team in the Youth Girls National Championships in May 2016.

WOOMERAS

The AFL Woomeras Program is a national female Indigenous development program.

The program symbolises strength and power – launching the girls into their futures using football to engage and empower. The Woomeras competed for the second time in the 2015 Youth Girls National Championships and toured New Zealand in December. The program enables the participants to be in an environment where they can work on their football skills, personal development and leadership skills.

INDIGENOUS COACHING ACADEMY

The AFL, in conjunction with the AFL Coaches Association, developed an Indigenous Coaching Academy in 2014 to fast-track and further develop Indigenous coaches in the AFL system.

In 2015, the academy featured 15 Indigenous coaches who were engaged in education sessions delivered by the AFLCA at the KickStart Championships and the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships respectively.

Participants completed Level 2 coaching accreditation and spent a week at an AFL club.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NATIONAL KICKSTART CHAMPIONSHIPS

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MULTICULTURAL

MULTICULTURAL ROUND

AFL Multicultural Round was held during round 19 of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season to acknowledge and celebrate our game’s cultural diversity.

The theme ‘Many Cultures, One Game’ highlighted the community engagement initiatives being undertaken by the Australian Football industry and acknowledged the increasing number of players from culturally diverse backgrounds who make up AFL player lists.

The feature of the round included the first Multicultural Festival, bi-lingual ground markings, in-language broadcasting and translated Shemir match balls.

AUSTRALIA POST MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program continued to grow in 2015 with 221 schools and more than 25,000 students engaged nationally.

More than 12,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse community backgrounds attended an AFL game – many for the first time – and more than 1000 multicultural children participated in a NAB AFL Auskick half-time game.

AUSTRALIA POST AFL MULTICULTURAL PLAYER AMBASSADORS

The AFL and Australia Post Multicultural Ambassadors program reached a record high in 2015, with more than 250 community leaders from a range of cultural backgrounds joining the program.

The program aims to connect AFL representatives with their particular communities and promote AFL as a vehicle for engagement and inclusion.

The program also provides community leaders with an official platform to become involved in the introduction and coordination of AFL-related activities in their communities, as well as opportunities for professional development.

Pictured: The Australia Post Multicultural Ambassadors pose for a selfie at the Flemington Community Centre.

FROM THE HEART

The Flying Boomerangs perform their war cry before a match against the Victorian Multicultural All Stars at Punt Rd Oval.
In 2015, six multicultural teams representing all states and territories competed in the All Nations Cup held in Cairns from April 13-15. To be eligible for the All Nations Cup squad, players must have been born overseas and come from a non-English-speaking background. The best-performing multicultural players from across all teams were selected for the World Team which competed in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships and was coached by David Rodan.

BACHAR HOULI PROGRAM
Developed by the Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program and Richmond player Bachar Houli, the program provides Islamic-based schools and students with an opportunity to play AFL. The program is supported by the Federal Government and comprises the following:

BACHAR HOULI CUP
The Bachar Houli Cup gives Islamic Schools the opportunity to play Australian Football against other schools in a friendly, fun and safe environment.

In 2015, the Bachar Houli Cup was held in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, with the aim of encouraging Islamic students to make the transition from school football into community clubs, and provides an opportunity to be selected into the Bachar Houli Leadership Academy.

BACHAR HOULI LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
The Bachar Houli Leadership Academy is a high-performance football talent camp for emerging junior players aged 14-17 who are from an Islamic background. The academy aims to fast-track the participants’ football development and provides genuine pathways for them to pursue football at an elite level.

AROUND THE REGIONS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
- Overall football participation in WA increased by nine per cent to 224,842.
- Female football participation increased by 23.5 per cent to 49,087.
- WA Auskick participation increased by 23 per cent to 39,659 – the largest in any state or territory.
- Subiaco won back-to-back WAFL premierships.
- Perth’s Aidan Tropiano won the Sandover Medal.
- WA players finished top three in the NAB AFL Rising Star Award.
- WA’s state women’s team became the WA’s state women’s team became the Western Australian Women’s Football League premiers.
- Eight WAFL players were selected in the NAB AFL Draft.

NSW/ACT
- 2015 started with an unprecedented six NAB Challenge games in NSW/ACT, including a sold-out Richmond and Port Adelaide clash in Albany and the first AFL ‘Pride Game’ between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle at Domain Oval.
- The GWS Giants sold out a game for the first time, drawing more than 12,000 to watch the round 21 clash against the Sydney Swans.
- The Giants had their best season on the field by some stretch, winning 11 games to finish just outside the top eight. The Swans continued to be one of the most consistent clubs in the AFL, sitting fourth at the end of the home and away season and progressing to the second week of the finals.
- Female football went from strength to strength with a successful National Youth Girls campaign, a significant number of new female teams in community competitions and a landmark women’s state game between NSW and Queensland at Blacktown, which will be remembered for Last Kassem’s amazing winning goal, which hit up the internet.
- NSW’s Maddy Collier was drafted by the Western Bulldogs, along with Canberra’s Heath Anderson.
- A number of Australian Football grounds received upgrades, including Phillip Oval in Canberra, Waratah Park in Sutherland and Gore Hill Oval on Sydney’s North Shore.
- Overall participation grew to more than 215,000 – a spike of around 13 per cent to 224,842.
- The GWS Giants sold out a game for the first time, drawing more than 12,000 to watch the round 21 clash against the Sydney Swans.

VICTORIA
- Total participation numbers reached 362,337, with female club participation growing by 27 per cent with 63 new female teams established.
- Youth Girls participation increased to 36 per cent, the largest influx of players achieved, with 842 new participants and new competitions in AFL North East Border, Mornington Peninsula JFL, Eastern FL and Woorinen.
- The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was another successful outing for TAC Cup and VFL players, with 54 picked up through the Victorian talent pathway. The TAC Cup produced 46 drafters (36 National Draft and 10 Rookie Draft) and the VFL produced eight (four National Draft and four Rookie Draft). This represents 52 per cent of new talent on to the primary list of AFL clubs.
- AFL Victoria’s Equalisation Working party released the Community Club Sustainability Program, which included a state-wide Players Points System and Policy.
- The TAC extended its partnership as a major sponsor of AFL Victoria, which will take its naming rights partnership of the TAC Cup into its 27th consecutive year.
- Peter Jackson extended its partnership with Essendon District Football League.
- The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was another successful outing for TAC Cup and VFL players, with 54 picked up through the Victorian talent pathway. The TAC Cup produced 46 drafters (36 National Draft and 10 Rookie Draft) and the VFL produced eight (four National Draft and four Rookie Draft). This represents 52 per cent of new talent on to the primary list of AFL clubs.

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GAME AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

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A Sporting Schools Program was implemented in Terms 3 and 4 after a pilot program ran in Terms 1 and 2. More than 11,000 participants were reached.
- Eight Female Level 0 Coaching courses were held which were attended by a total of 240 females. The program led to an all-female coaching cohort, attended by 25 females at Arden St.
- Access All Abilities (AA) Auskick Strategy implemented with 12 AAA Auskicks centres in operation.
- Hosted the AFL National Inclusion Carnival that won the Victorian Government’s Community Sporting Event of the Year award.
- New region development structure implemented in western and north-west Melbourne with support from the Essendon District FL, Riddell District FL and the Western Region FL.
- Conducted Five Regional Diversity TAC Cup squads with 128 multicultural and indigenous youth participating.
- The V-Line Cup was taken outside Melbourne for the first time, travelling to the Geelong region.
- The tournament, which included a youth girls component, had a total economic benefit to the region of more than $1.7 million.

Launch of two Diversity Umpiring Academies at the Australian International Academy in Coburg linked to Essendon Football League and schools in Seaport linked to the Goulburn Valley Umpires Association, with a total of 33 students participating and umpiring on weekends.
- All-female umpiring panel appointed to a TAC Cup game – an innovation that is being mirrored at community level.
- Completed a Regional Facilities Strategy in partnership with AFL Barwon and the five councils in the Geelong region. Similar regional strategies were started in the west of Melbourne and in the AFL Goldfields region.
- A range of mutually beneficial government partnerships have been developed with agencies such as Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth, VicSport as well as with local government authorities. An example of these is the $650,000 investment secured from VicHealth to fully launch, implement and evaluate AFL Active across Victoria.
The Queensland All Nations team won a 55-member Youth Girls Academy and Queensland continues to have the NT Thunder captured their second AFL 9s participation NORTHERN TERRITORY 98 99 seven picked up in the Rookie Draft. Alice Springs. and the West Coast Eagles. Earlier Season match between Melbourne and the Brisbane Lions delivered community camps in Mackay, the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay. Football participation rose 3796 per cent to 67238. and played in the AFL women’s exhibition matches. The first under-14 Female State Championships were held at Maroochydore. always Football in Tasmania. Participation totalled more than 140,000 people in programs and competitions, with another 60,000 attending promotional activities. The 18th USPFL National Championships were held in Austin, Texas, in October with 45 teams competing across six divisions. In Europe, the annual Fitzpatrick Cup, named after the AFL Commission Chairman, bringing together men and women from universities, was held at the University of Birmingham. The first of two inaugural AFL Europe events took place in March, kicking off with a Champions League (nine-a-side tournament) inviting the region. South Pacific conducted a talent camp in Brisbane and competed in the Queensland Under-16 State Championships in May. The Nauru Stars took part, including The Peace Team, consisting of Israelis and Palestinians, who are the newest associate members of AFL Europe. There are 16 internationals on AFL lists. The third match played outside Australia for premiership points was held when St Kilda took on Carlton in Wellington, New Zealand, on Anzac Day. The NAB AFL Academy Level I squad toured New Zealand for the fourth time in April and played a match against the New Zealand Hawks at Westpac Stadium in Wellington. Giovanni Mountain-Silbery, Barclay Miller and Joe Baker-Thomases were awarded international scholarships with St Kilda, New Zealander Kurt Heathery was added to Hawthorn’s primary list and Shem-Kalvin Taputu became an international rookie. The AFL Indigenous under-12 women’s team, the Woomeras, conducted an inaugural 10-day New Zealand tour in December. The squad played two matches against the New Zealand Kahu. TVNZ announced a new AFL broadcast deal for New Zealand. The inaugural youth competitions started in Wellington and Auckland, incorporating female competition. St Kilda held a community camp in three New Zealand cities – Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The South Pacific regions had 63,000 participants. There were 63 Level 0 and 30 Level 1 coaches accredited in the region. South Pacific conducted a talent camp in Brisbane and competed in the Queensland Under-16 State Championships in May. The Nauru Stars were champions in the Ociania Cup held in December for under-15 boys. The NAB AFL Academy Level 2 conducted a high-performance training camp at the IMG Academy in the United States in January. International Combines were held in Dublin, Los Angeles and Wellington. There are 16 internationals on AFL lists. The additions were Matt Korcheck and Dean Warren started as AFL Queensland’s Executive Officer. Six Queensland players were drafted and played in the AFL women’s exhibition matches. A NEAFL representative team defeated the Tasmania State League at Brisbane’s Moreton Bay Central Sports Complex. Labrador won its first QAFL premiership, defeating 2016 champion Morningside. The Coorparoo women’s team won its third consecutive QAFL Grand Final. The first under-14 Female State Championships were held at Maroochydore. Queensland Boundary umpire Gareth Hughes and goal umpire Alastair Mindrum were added to the AFL umpires list and field umpire Alex Whetton was rookie-listed. The first under-14 Female State Championships were held at Maroochydore. Dutch international Dylan Shiel was selected with pick No. 15 by Fremantle in the Rookie Draft. Darwin’s TIO Stadium hosted a successful Toyota AFL Premierships Season match between Melbourne and North Melbourne. Earlier in the season, the Demons played Port Adelaide at TIO Traeger Park in Alice Springs. Dutch international Dylan Shiel was selected with pick No. 15 by Fremantle in the Rookie Draft. Darwin’s TIO Stadium hosted a successful Toyota AFL Premierships Season match between Melbourne and North Melbourne. Earlier in the season, the Demons played Port Adelaide at TIO Traeger Park in Alice Springs. The Queensland Female Football Strategy (2016-18) was published. The state’s first Access All Abilities Auskick centre was established at Aspley FC. Brisbane Lions starayne Bayes was named Queensland Disability Inclusion Ambassador. 47 new female community teams were formed. AFL Queensland became the first state affiliate to map all its facilities and participation using a GIS computer interface to improve strategic planning. More than $40 million worth of infrastructure projects were completed Australia’s first AFL Diversity Academy was announced, based at Inala in Brisbane’s multicultural western suburbs. AFL Queensland, the Gold Coast Suns and the Brisbane Lions delivered community camps in Mackay, the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay. Female participation rose 3796 per cent to 67238. The AFL Queensland Junior Football Department was established to administer the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast junior leagues and provide support to junior affiliate leagues in the Darling Downs, North Rivers, Wide Bay, Mackay, Capricornia, Townsville and Cairns. Queensland boundary umpire Gareth Hughes and goal umpire Alastair Mindrum were added to the AFL umpires list and field umpire Alex Whetton was rookie-listed. Dean Warren started as AFL Queensland’s Executive Officer. Six Queensland players were drafted and played in the AFL women’s exhibition matches. A NEAFL representative team defeated the Tasmania State League at Brisbane’s Moreton Bay Central Sports Complex. Labrador won its first QAFL premiership, defeating 2016 champion Morningside. The Coorparoo women’s team won its third consecutive QAFL Grand Final. The first under-14 Female State Championships were held at Maroochydore. Australian Football participants in South Australia increased by eight per cent to a total of 142,291. This included a three per cent rise in Auskick participants to ensure SA reached a total of more than 8000 Auskickers for the first time. More than 200 young females were introduced to Australian Football through the introduction of the inaugural SANFL Girls Competition. All eight SANFL clubs fielded a team at under-14 and under-16 level, the first time a female competition has had every team represented at state league level. West Adelaide won its first SANFL premiership in 32 years, defeating Woodville-West Torrens at Adelaide Oval in front of the largest state league crowd in 2015. Eleven South Australians were selected in the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, two more than in 2014. Sixteen South Australians were chosen in the NAB AFL Draft and Rookie Draft, including seven from regional areas. SANFL field umpire Craig Flier was elevated to the AFL senior umpiring list. It is the first time the SANFL has had four field umpires on the AFL senior umpiring list, with Flier joining Justin Schmitt, Sam Hay and Curtis D’ehy.
**Community Partners**

The AFL can make a significant positive change to the lives of individuals and to the strength of our communities. As Australia's No. 1 sport, we care about our connection with people and communities, and we have a responsibility to deliver positive social outcomes back to the communities in which we operate.

**Recognise**

The 2015 Toyota AFL premiership Season marked 20 years since the AFL declared there was no place for racism in football and the League adopted its own racial vilification code.

Two decades later, the League is now part of the movement of Australians who say there is no place for race discrimination in the nation’s rule book either and who know it’s time to recognise the First Australians.

The AFL is proud to have an ongoing partnership with the Recognise campaign, which supports and focuses on the push to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia’s constitution and to ensure there’s no place for racial discrimination in it.

In Indigenous Round, held during National Reconciliation Week, the AFL celebrated the contributions and sheer excellence of our country’s Indigenous players, and Australia’s Indigenous heritage.

We recalled the outstanding Indigenous players of the past who were trailblazers and recognised the brilliance, talent and skill of the current generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players.

The campaign’s R symbol was painted in the middle of each AFL venue during Indigenous Round. Sydney Swans star and former Australian of the Year Adam Goodes and Lance Franklin featured in a television commercial which was played at all nine matches during Indigenous Round. It was also provided to AFL broadcast partners Fox Footy and Channel Seven who played it in the lead-up to and during Indigenous Round.

The AFL’s support led to a significant boost in awareness of the campaign, with more than 14,400 Australians signing up as supporters.

**AFL SportsReady**

Now in its 31st year of operation, AFL SportsReady continues to support the development needs of AFL players and the industry’s entry-level employment requirements. The organisation continues to expand its footprint across the country with record numbers of trainees and students.

In 2014-15, AFL SportsReady worked with the AFL industry to provide 245 traineeships to young Australian, whether they be full-time, part-time or school-based. This includes the provision of trainees to state leagues and AFL clubs.

Eight current and former AFL SportsReady trainees were selected for the 2015 National Women’s Exhibition Clash and five trainees were selected in the 2015 NAB AFL Draft.

AFL SportsReady continues to provide player education with players such as Patrick Dangerfield, Scott Pendlebury and Marcus Bontempelli studying a diploma of management.

In total, more than 250 players from all AFL clubs have studied with SportsReady Education, with many participating in the Football Induction Program and Next Goal programs.

AFL SportsReady has developed and delivered an entire suite of new services to meet the needs of the AFL industry – including players, coaches, umpires and football administrators at the elite level through to coaches, volunteers and players at the state league and junior levels.

Programs are developed and provided via partnerships between AFL SportsReady and the AFL or the AFL Players Association to ensure tailored, relevant programs that will benefit players and the industry and grow the game.

Aside from the AFL industry, AFL SportsReady continues to assist with education and employment outside of football, with almost 700 young people supported into traineeships in 2015.

More than one third of these trainees are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

AFL SportsReady works closely with employers to deliver traineeships, with partners including NAB, ANZ, Westpac, CBA, Australia Post, Telstra, the AFL, AFL clubs and associations and schools.

Ladder and the Australian Government, traineeships are now being provided through arts and creative organisations such as the Australian Ballet, Regional Arts NSW and the National Gallery of Victoria.

Now, as a provider of education, AFL SportsReady offers trainees certificate and diploma courses which have a focus on sport and recreation, fitness, business and management. In 2015, more than 1000 students started with AFL SportsReady Education.

AFL SportsReady has partnerships with universities in every state (La Trobe University, Griffith University, the University of Technology Sydney, University of Canberra, Curtin University, Flinders University and the University of Tasmania). These partnerships give SportsReady Education students who complete a Certificate IV or diploma qualification an opportunity to gain direct entry and in some cases a credit towards a degree.

In 2015, AFL SportsReady released its first Reconciliation Action Plan creating leaders for cultural change, awareness and respect, along with a number of initiatives to help Close the Gap. AFL SportsReady provides opportunities and support to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to overcome barriers through the delivery of tailored educational programs, employment opportunities, mentoring, gatherings and cultural awareness training.

**Ladder**

The AFL continued to support Ladder, which was established in conjunction with the AFL Players’ Association in 2007 to tackle youth homelessness.

Ladder believes a young person’s experience with homelessness should not define their life, a belief that is also supported by the AFL.

Ladder works with young people who have experienced homelessness to help them break the cycle of homelessness and reach their potential.
Every player participating in an AFL home and away match donates $25 of his match fee to Ladder. This year these donations raised more than $270,000 and the AFL made a matching donation, resulting in a total contribution of more than $382,000.

In the past financial year, Ladder provided around 6800 hours of direct service to young people, including health, wellbeing and fitness sessions, skills training, mentoring and one-on-one support.

Past and present AFL footballers are involved as volunteers, ambassadors and mentors, which provides young people with guidance, support and encouragement to find a way out of the debilitating cycle of homelessness.

Ladder is also the official charity partner of the Toyota AFL Finals Series.

OUR WATCH

Our Watch was established to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and children.

Through the Our Watch Sports Engagement Program, the AFL will strive to increase awareness of issues related to violence against women within our organisation and across our affiliated members, partners and the broader community.

The AFL and the AFL Watch will see the AFL ensure violence against women policies are up to date and supported by all staff, and allow the AFL’s Respectful Relationships program to be delivered face-to-face with a focus on community leagues.

It will also support the development of resources that promote the prevention of violence against women to be distributed through the AFL’s media platforms and club networks at the community and elite level.

Football clubs at all levels bring together large numbers of people and play a significant role in promoting safe, inclusive and welcoming environments for all, while continuing to increase the participation opportunities for females that will help eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence-supportive attitudes.

The AFL is committed to supporting Our Watch and using football as a vehicle to address gender inequality, sexism and cultures that trivialise and perpetuate violence against women and their children.

REACH – JIM STYNES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The AFL, the Reach Foundation and the AFL Watch together established the Jim Stynes Scholarship Fund in 2011 in honour of former Melbourne president and Brownlow medalist, the late Jim Stynes.

As part of a partnership with the AFL, the Federal Government has provided $3 million to establish the scholarship fund to help disadvantaged people pursue their sporting dreams and reach their potential.

The scholarships recognise Stynes’ contribution as an outstanding footballer, administrator, philanthropist, charity worker and writer.

In 2015, the AFL and Reach awarded 37 scholarships with a value of up to $20,000. Number 37 was Stynes’ original number when he joined Melbourne.

Recipients received funding towards football, travel and education expenses.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The AFL’s aim is to be truly national and truly representative, and part of this commitment is to be a workplace and code that is a welcoming environment regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or culture.

To this end, the AFL has committed to a range of initiatives to develop a welcoming environment for LGBTQI athletes, administrators, coaches and spectators.

In 2015, the AFL was involved in the following initiatives:

- The AFL joined three other national football codes on a float in the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade.
- Hosted a Pride match during the NAB Challenge between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle at Drummoyne Oval.
- Supported the launch of Essendon’s Respectful Relationship program to be delivered face-to-face.
- Supported the Jim Stynes Scholarship Fund to help disadvantaged boys and girls pursue their sporting dreams.
- Supported the launch of Essendon’s Purple Bombers supporter group.
- Supported the AFLPA in the IDAHOT campaign.
- Supported and helped publicise a Pride match in the Yarra Valley Mountain District Football League between Yarra Glenn and Warburton.
- Announced the first AFL Pride match during the 2016 home and away season will be played between St Kilda and the Sydney Swans.
- The AFL also a member of the Pride in Sport Advisory Group, with representatives from basketball, golf, swimming, water polo, the NRL, Cricket Australia, the Australian Rugby Union and the FFA.

The role of the Advisory Group is to assist with the development and implementation of the Pride in Sport Index. The Index is a joint initiative of Pride in Diversity, a not-for-profit workplace diversity support organisation; the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and the Bingham Cup.

It will be used as a benchmarking tool to measure LGBTI diversity and inclusion within national sporting organisations.

SUPPORT FOR CLUBS AND PARTNERS

The AFL also offers support to the programs and commitments of our clubs and partners.

Highlights in 2015 included the Big Freeze at the ‘G, supported by the AFL and broadcasters, to help increase awareness about Motor Neurone Disease, and raise more than $2.2 million for research.

The AFL also supported the Breast Cancer Network of Australia game, and the White Ribbon Cup, hosted by our clubs.

For the first time, the AFL also supported the Children’s Cancer Foundation Million Dollar Lunch at Crown, which delivered an incredible $2 million in funding for research into children’s cancer.
Legal and Integrity

Andrew Dillon
AFL General Counsel

Brett Clothier
Head of Competition Integrity

Major projects ranged from assisting the negotiation and drafting of the new Broadcast Rights agreement to dealing with all matters relating to the competition’s integrity.

In 2015, the AFL Legal and Integrity Department continued its provision of legal services, commercial advice and support to all departments across the AFL, as well as working with AFL clubs, AFL Players Association, AFL Umpires Association and the AFL’s state-affiliated bodies on various matters and projects.

Key issues dealt with by the Legal and Integrity Department during 2015 were:

Broadcast Agreement

During August, a significant portion of the department’s resources were allocated towards the negotiation and drafting of the new Broadcast Rights agreements with Seven Network, News Limited and Telstra. As outlined in this Annual Report, the work on this matter laid the groundwork for the future of the AFL.

Future Leader

The Swans missed the midfield drive generated by Luke Parker, who broke his leg against Collingwood and did not play in the finals.
Football Club players to the Court of
appealing the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal
Anti-Doping Agency notified the AFL it was
in compliance with the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

a lifetime ban on the former Essendon
support person.

11.2 of the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

reasons for the decision.

34 players on March 31, 2015, and published
substance, Thymosin Beta-4, during the
season. The decision of the Tribunal
opened on February 17, 2015, after opening on
2012 season. The decision of the Tribunal
on February 17, 2015, after opening on
February 10, 2015, which had

voluntary provisional suspension.

On March 16, 2015, the AFL announced
it had concluded a number of matters
relating to its Anti-gambling Regulations,
including finalising the dot.AFL domain
name project.

negotiated and drafting of the agreement for the
AFL to sell its shareholding in Foosport
(formerly SportingPulse) and in the
drafting of a new licence agreement for
the administration and management of
country football competitions.

Grand Final Ticketing Scheme and
related legislative powers.

Fan Base and Gambling.

leadership, including finalising the dot.AFL domain
name project.

Negotiating and drafting of the agreement for
AFL to sell its shareholding in Foosport
(formerly SportingPulse) and in the
drafting of a new licence agreement for
the administration and management of
country football competitions.

legal and Integrity Department in
relation to its Anti-gambling Regulations,
including finalising the dot.AFL domain
name project.

9. Negotiating and drafting venue
and funding agreements for various
club training and administration
bases – SGG, Gabba and the new

3. AFL ANTI-DOPING TRIBUNAL HEARINGS

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

On Tuesday, August 25, 2015, the World
Anti-Doping Agency notified the AFL it was
appealing the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal
decision made in relation to the Essendon
Football Club players to the Court of
Arbitration for Sport.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport
hearing was held in Sydney from Monday,
November 16, to Friday, November 20.

On Tuesday, January 12, 2016, the Court
of Arbitration for Sport ruled:

1. The appeal filed by the by the World
Anti-Doping Agency on 8 May 2015 is
admitted.

2. The decision rendered by the Australian
League Anti-Doping Tribunal,
31 March 2015, is set aside.

3. Messrs Thomas Bellchambers, Alex
Brown, Jake Carlisle, Travis Colyer,
Alwyn Davey, Luke Davis, Corey

The investigation found Brodie had
breached AFL rules by placing a $300
head-to-head multi bet on five round
matches, including one the GWS Giants
and Port Adelaide.

The investigation found Brodie had
breached AFL rules by placing a $300
head-to-head multi bet on five round
matches, including one the GWS Giants
and Port Adelaide.

PAYMENT OF FINE

On November 4, 2015, Keeffe and
Thomas were formally advised in writing
they would each receive a two-year ban
after pleading guilty to a breach of the
AFL Anti-Doping Code.

ANTI-GAMBLING RULE VIOLATIONS

On March 30, 2015, the AFL announced
it had concluded a number of matters
relating to its Anti-gambling Regulations,
including finalising the dot.AFL domain
name project.

The investigation found Brodie had
breached AFL rules by placing a $300
head-to-head multi bet on five round
matches, including one the GWS Giants
and Port Adelaide.

The investigation found Brodie had
breached AFL rules by placing a $300
head-to-head multi bet on five round
matches, including one the GWS Giants
and Port Adelaide.

PAYMENT OF FINE

Brodie was formally advised in writing
he would be suspended from duties for
the next 13 months within the AFL
competition until December 1, 2016.
Brodie will be required to reapply for
registration as a club official at the end of
that suspension period.

Other major deals with by AFL
Legal and Integrity Department in
2015 included:

1. Assisting AFL Victoria with formulation of
a statewide player points
system as part of a broader Club
Sustainability Program.

2. Assisting the Football Operations
Department to review and revise
the AFL Tribunal Guidelines and
associated rules.

3. Negotiating and drafting of the agreement for the
AFL to sell its shareholding in Foosport
(formerly SportingPulse) and in the
drafting of a new licence agreement for
the administration and management of
country football competitions.

4. Grand Final Ticketing Scheme and

5. Active role on the committee for the
Coalition of Major Professional &
Participation Sports (COMPPS).

6. Accreditation terms and conditions
for access for the AFL media industry.

7. Management of final year injury claims.

8. Continued work on the AFL’s integrity
leadership, including finalising the dot.AFL domain
name project.

9. Negotiating and drafting venue
and funding agreements for various
club training and administration
bases – SGG, Gabba and the new

10. Updating the Australian Football
Anti-Doping Policy to reflect changes
in the WADA Code effective from
January 1, 2015.

2015 NAB AFL DRAFT

The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was significantly
different to previous years after the
introduction of a new Father-Son and
Academy bidding process. Previously, the
Father-Son and Academy bidding draft
was held within the Exchange Period.

The introduction of this new process as
part of its equalisation philosophies.
In altering the rules, the AFL sought
to activities by the AFL Bellachamber and
NSW to continue to develop players
through their club academies and also
AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

**FREE AGENCY**

Under the rules agreed to by the AFL and the AFLPA in February 2010, a total of 11 restricted free agents and 56 unrestricted free agents were eligible to consider their future options in 2015.

**FREE AGENCY MOVEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>UNRESTRICTED</th>
<th>DELISTED</th>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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**FATHER-SON AND ACADEMY PLAYERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Bid Team</th>
<th>Match Team</th>
<th>Delisted</th>
<th>Trades</th>
<th>Promoted</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>First Drafted</th>
<th>Pre-Season Drafted</th>
<th>Rookie Drafted</th>
<th>On-Traded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bally Rice</td>
<td>Father-Son</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2014/2015</td>
<td>2015/2016</td>
<td>2016/2017</td>
<td>2017/2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNRESTRICTED FREE AGENTS**

- Adelaide – Richard Douglas, Brodie Martin, Andy Otten, Brent Reilly, Scott Thompson
- Brisbane Lions – Jed Adcock
- Carlton – Dennis Armfield, Andrew Carrazzo, David Elliott
- Collingwood – Brent Macaffer
- Essendon – Courtney Dempsey, Dustin Fletcher, Tatey-Pears, Brent Stanton, Jason Windlerich
- Fremantle – Ryan Crowley, Paul Duffield, Michael Johnson, Luke McPharlin, Matthew Pavlich, Aaron Sandilands
- Geelong – Jimmy Bartel, Corey Enright, Steve Johnson, James Kelly, Andrew Mackie, Matthew Stokes, Dawson Simpson
- Hawthorn – Luke Hodge, Matthew Suckling, Brendan Whitecross
- Melbourne – Mark Janmar
- North Melbourne – Michael Firrito, Brent Harvey, Nathan Grima, Scott McMahon, Drew Petrie, Robbie Tarrant
- Port Adelaide – Kane Cornes, Tom Logan (rookie)
- Richmond – Nathan Foley, Chris Newman, Alex Rance
- St Kilda – Sam Fisher, Adam Schneider (rookie)
- Sydney Swans – Adam Goodes, Heath Grundy, Ted Richards
- West Coast – Sam Butler, Patrick Dangerfield, Beau Waters
- Western Bulldogs – Matthew Boyd, Jarrad Grant, Dale Morris, Robert Murphy, Easton Wood

**FATHER-SON AND ACADEMY PLAYERS**

- Corey Wagner (Brisbane Academy) selected by North Melbourne with selection 43.

**FREE AGENCIES EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS**

- Jarrad Grant (Western Bulldogs to Gold Coast)
- Daniel Gorringe (Gold Coast to Carlton)
- Andrew Moore (Port Adelaide to Richmond)
- Matthew Wright (Adelaide to Carlton)

**PLAYER MOVEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trades</th>
<th>Players</th>
<th>Selections</th>
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<tr>
<td>2018/2019</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEGAL AND INTEGRITY**

Preserve the historical significance of Father-Son selections, while ensuring the ‘market value’ is paid for drafters.

A Draft Value Index was introduced which allocates a points value to each draft selection.

In order to match a bid, the nominating club must pay the points value of the selection number of the bid by the other club. If during the draft another club bids for a nominated Father-Son or Academy player, the bid can be matched by the nominating club.

The pure Draft Value Index value is discounted by 20 per cent for all subsequent selections.

See table next page for the Father-Son and Academy players selected by matching during the National Draft. A further two Academy players were not matched by their clubs and were selected by the bidding club:

- Josh Dunkley (Sydney Academy) selected by the Western Bulldogs with selection 25.
- Corey Wagner (Brisbane Academy) selected by North Melbourne with selection 43.
A total of 40 players and 103 draft selections (of which 14 were future selections and 32 were on-traded) were traded during the AFL Exchange Period.

The following players were traded:
- Dean Gore (Geelong), Curtly Hampton (GWS Giants), Troy Menzel (Carlton), Paul Seedman (Collingwood) to Adelaide.
- Ryan Bastinac (North Melbourne), Tom Bell (Carlton), Jarred Jansen (Geelong), Josh Walker (Geelong) to the Brisbane Lions.
- Sam Kerridge, Harley Bennell, Craig Bird (Melbourne), Adam Treloar (GWS Giants) to Collingwood.
- Lachie Neale, Patrick Dangerfield (Geelong), Chris Yarran (Essendon) to Sydney.
- Daniel Currie (North Melbourne), Matt Rizza (West Coast) to Gold Coast.
- Steve Johnson (Geelong) to Geelong.
- Harry Bennell (Gold Coast) to Fremantle.
- Patrick Dangerfield (Adelaide), Lachie Henderson (Carlton), Zac Smith (Gold Coast) to Geelong.
- Michael Talia, Chris Yarran, Adam Treloar (GWS Giants) to Carlton.
- Alex Gueant (Sydney) to Essendon.
- Jack Fitzpatrick (Melbourne) to Hawthorn.
- Dylan Shiel (Collingwood) to Port Adelaide.
- Jed Anderson (Hawthorn) to North Melbourne.
- Charlie Dixon (Gold Coast), Jimmy Toumpas (Melbourne) to Port Adelaide.
- Chris Yarran (Carlton), Jacob Townsend (GWS Giants) to Richmond.
- Jake Carlisle (Essendon), Nathan Freeman (Collingwood) to St Kilda.
- Michael Tali (Western Bulldogs), Callum Sinclair (West Coast) to Sydney.
- Jonathan Giles (Essendon), Lewis Jetta (Sydney), Jack Redden (Brisbane Lions) to West Coast.

ROOKIES

In addition to 68 first-time drafted players being selected at the NAB AFL Draft, 14 rooks were promoted to clubs to their Primary List.

As well as 64 players being selected at the Rookie Draft (of which 43 were first-time drafted), 42 rooks were retained on the Rookie List by clubs.

2015 TPP SUMMARY

The Total Player Payment limit per club increased 4.6 per cent in 2015, from $173.4 million in 2014 to $186.9 million, while gross player payments increased by $188.8 million in 2015 to $202.2 million.

The second limit per club of $963,000 to $992,000 and the amount spent on these services by clubs increased by three per cent from $200,2 million to $220.54 million, an increase of 6.6 per cent over 2014.

As well as 64 players being selected at the Rookie Draft (of which 43 were first-time drafted), 42 rooks were retained on the Rookie List by clubs.

Additional services agreements and $1.7 million from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of the clubs, the total earned by players in 2015 was $202,2 million, an increase of 6.7 per cent on the 2014 total of $200,2 million.

The average payment by clubs for a listed player in 2015 was $302,014, an increase of 6.7 per cent over 2014.

One club was sanctioned during 2015 for breaching the AFL Player List rules: 
- Collingwood was sanctioned $500,000 for failing to lodge forms relating to list changes. Collingwood fully co-operated in the matter and this and other mitigating factors, including that the breach was an administrative error, not intentional and the club’s good faith record were taken into account regarding the sanction.

2015-2015 SUMMARY OF AFL PLAYER EARNINGS

The following table shows the total player earnings for the 2015 season.
AFL Media continues to provide relevant and timely information all year round and is exploring a range of options to improve its service to supporters.

AFL Media used the strong operational and performance outcomes garnered in previous seasons to attain solid growth in 2015 across all our key deliverables and aspirations. With the AFL season stretching from the NAB Challenge in February through until the NAB AFL Draft at the end of November, our aspiration has been, and continues to be, to serve our supporters with relevant and timely information that a supporter requires all season long. The integration of news, video, live streaming, transactional, ticketing, fixtures, participation, AFL Fantasy and AFL Tipping, coupled with and supporting our 18 clubs, has afforded the entire AFL and Club Digital Network with a platform to ensure we continue to put the supporter at the centre of all we do.

As a result, the AFL and Club Digital Network, comprising the 18 club mobile and desktop sites, the 18 club apps, AFL.com.au and the AFL Live app saw traffic grow by 8.5 per cent from November 1, 2014, to October 31, 2015, to 104 million monthly unique visitors.

The ever-changing disruption that a multitude of different digital options for consumers provides ensures that AFL Media must continue to explore a range of options to capitalise on whatever device or technology platform a supporter uses to access the AFL and clubs.

To meet these changes, the AFL, in partnership with our digital rights partner Telstra, continues to explore and develop a range of new offerings. The use of social media is a great example of extending the reach afforded by personalised digital offerings. In 2015, the AFL saw growth of 36 per cent in our social media accounts. Importantly, we have also launched our official Weibo social media service – a native Chinese language social media tool that allows us to offer up tailored content to the Chinese language community.

The opportunity that new delivery platforms offer is to continue to reach existing and new supporters to our game. The evolution of platforms such as Snapchat, which saw us reach more than 77 million worldwide users on Grand Final day, to the development of Telstra TV and the content that will be provisioned for it in 2016 enables us to ensure our product and offerings are available to as wide an audience as possible.
The continuing success of the AFL women’s exhibition matches also provided a new opportunity to engage fans. AFL Media produced and streamed the first match in 2015 and simultaneously streamed the second match with our broadcast partner, the Seven Network. Both matches were a resounding success. Coupled with our coverage of the AFL Women’s Draft, the emergence of the strong and growing interest at participation and viewing engagement levels augurs well for continued development and opportunity of women’s football in the digital consumption landscape.

AFL Media also produced and live-streamed six NAB Challenge matches which Fox Footy was unable to schedule for logistical purposes, and we produced and live-streamed the Grand Final Day NAB All Stars game.

The strength of the AFL Digital Network revolves around the contribution and engagement that, together with the AFL Media team, our 18 clubs also bring with their own personality, content, supporter and member engagement tools, social media activity and connectedness. The coming together of our respective teams provides a total AFL Network approach which maximises opportunities for corporate partners and provides a direct link to a fan’s club of support. The great diversity of club content and products is a tangible link to the market-leading results of 18 clubs and the AFL combining to make the AFL Digital Network.

**TELSTRA PARTNERSHIP**

Telstra has been the valued and long-term digital partner of the AFL. In 2015, that relationship was strengthened even further with the completion of the Digital Rights Partnership which saw Telstra cement greater digital opportunities through until the end of the 2022 AFL season. The continued rise of the mobile platform and extensions into connected televisions provides more opportunities for our clubs, the AFL and Telstra.

In 2015, the AFL Live App Pass for domestic live streaming on mobile devices saw total subscriptions increase by 49 per cent year on year. Total live minutes streamed to mobile devices was up 51 per cent on the 2014 total (of 118 million hours) to more than 178 million hours. Each match generated nearly 30 minutes of viewing time per user per match.

Telstra also continues to be an enormous supporter of our other programming initiatives – be it establishing Wi-Fi via Telstra Air at the Foxton Grand Final Live Site Precinct, supporting our live broadcasts of the NAB AFL Pre-Draft Show, supporting NIRS in the broadcast of AFL matches via radio into indigenous communities throughout Australia, or supporting our pre-season two-hour daily live program First Bounce.

The support the AFL receives from Telstra Corporation CEO Andy Penn and Chief Marketing Officer and Group Executive Media Joe Pollard and their teams ensures we are able to deliver the best possible experience for our supporters with the knowledge we have the full technical and operational support which Telstra provides. Continued development of new product offerings, such as the AFL Live App for the Apple Watch (which won a 2015 Melbourne Design Award for Best Digital Experience – Mobile) is one example of our forays into new and expanded product offerings.

The extension of our partnership until at least 2022 and the role AFL Media plays with Telstra that relationship will ensure our supporters will be provided with the best possible digital presence and communications in any Australian sport.

**2015 KEY METRICS**

1. Aggregate video streams (excluding Live Pass domestic streaming) of 123 million, up 21 per cent (2014: 84 million, up 23 per cent).

2. Aggregate monthly unique visitors of 104 million, up 8.5 per cent.

3. Nielsen online monthly unique audience measurement for the AFL Network (clubs and AFL) ranked the AFL as the No. 1 digital sporting network throughout the entire season. Additionally, when Smartphone and Tablet analytics through the Nielsen measurement system were provided for the first time in August, September, October and November, the AFL Network ranked as the No. 1 digital sporting network for those devices.

4. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Weibo) grew by 36 per cent to have more than 1.53 million followers.

5. The total number of downloads of the AFL Live App, AFL Fantasy App and club apps totals more than 4.7 million (3.8 million same time last year). Importantly, and aside from just downloads, the engagement metrics for our apps have also grown.

6. International Digital Rights revenue associated with our WatchAFL service grew by more than 20 per cent, with subscriptions up by a similar percentage.

In addition to the key performance metrics, AFL Media introduced a range of new non-match video content and other initiatives to ensure the voracious consumption of this type of consumer-led content continues at pace. In 2015, AFL Media introduced:

1. Friday Front Bar – featuring Mick Molloy, Andy Maher and Sam Pang.


3. Whistleblowers – a weekly program explaining umpiring decisions.


5. NAB AFL Pre-Draft Show – a two-hour pre-draft live show featuring Garry Lyon, Matt Thompson and Callum Twomey as part of our Road to the Draft series.

6. Multi-Language audio commentary on all nine games in the Multicultural Round.

These programs were in addition to our daily Footy Feed news program, weekly Access All Areas program, weekly Charged program, our vignettes as part of the AFL Football Operations’ Respect &
Responsibility’ series, the emotive Hall of Fame vignettes, the AFL season-opener, the popular series featuring players returning to their original clubs in the popular series featuring players from the Boer War through to those who served in Vietnam was proudly launched by Kevin Sheedy and former Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu in the lead-up to ANZAC Day. It is a seminal piece of work that AFL Media was pleased to be associated with.

Entering its 105th year of publication in 2016 will be the much-respected and valued AFL Record. While the digital disruption continues to challenge traditional media products such as magazines and newsprint, this publication continues to hold its place in the AFL sporting landscape. With extension products such as the AFL Record: Great Football Decades 80s, the AFL Record: Season Guide and AFL Record for Kids, our AFL Record and AFL Record-branded publications continue to buck the trend of declining circulations – holding their own year-on-year aggregated together. With meticulous care and pride, this hallmark of “going to the footy” still provides our supporters and advertising partners with a unique and cherished place at our venues and in homes around the country.

In a year that was marked by the devastating events surrounding the death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh, there were also other significant social issues that AFL Media tried to shine a light on. Our ongoing editorial and production efforts to discuss and raise awareness of mental health is one we will continue to pursue. Sometimes it is a simple image that can say more than words ever will, and we were extremely pleased to see Michael Willson’s black and white photograph of Geelong player Mitch Clark recognised by the Australian Football Media Association as its Photograph of the Year.

AFL Media has, with the strong commitment to quality content, innovative product and digital extensions and placing the supporter at the centre of what we do, positioned ourselves as a leading destination for our corporate partners and advertisers.

Our design team has a strong reputation in the AFL community for providing creative and results-oriented work and, increasingly, our video production team is also adding to the editorial video content it delivers with client-activated native video production. This is supported by our commercial team which has consistently found outcomes and solutions across AFL Media assets for our partners and advertisers.

The new broadcast rights cycle and our ongoing digital partnership with Telstra provides AFL Media with an opportun moment to continue to invest in our digital engagement with supporters at all levels of football. We will continue to solidify the gains we have made in 2015 to ensure we are primed for the new rights cycle with innovative fan and club-led digital content and products which connect with supporters through the shifting sands of the technology landscape.
The Hawks make it three flags in a row as the AFL bids farewell to some of the game’s greats, including Goodes, Judd and Fletcher.

In this era of drafts and salary caps, the three-peat was thought to be unattainable. But the powerful Hawthorn unit under the tutelage of coach Alastair Clarkson continues to astonish.

In 2015, the Hawks made it three in a row with their demolition of West Coast. Cyril Rioli won the Norm Smith Medal, following in the footsteps of his famous uncles, the late Maurice Rioli and Michael Long, as past winners of the medal.

In winning its 13th flag, Hawthorn sits behind only Carlton, Essendon and Collingwood for AFL/VFL premierships.

Despite not making it to the Grand Final, it was a big year for Fremantle. It produced its first Brownlow medallist, midfielder Nat Fyfe, and took out the McClelland Trophy for the first time.

The Western Bulldogs improved dramatically and the All-Australian selectors recognised the performances of Robert Murphy, Easton Wood and Jake Stringer, with Murphy awarded the accolade of captaining the team.

Footy mourned the tragic death of Adelaide coach Phil Walsh mid-season, causing the abandonment of the Crows’ round 14 fixture against Geelong.

After breaking the long-standing record of Collingwood legend Jock McHale for most games coached, Mick Malthouse lasted only three more matches before losing his job at Carlton and a similar fate befell Essendon's James Hird later in the season.

The game farewelled several big names, notably dual Brownlow medallists Adam Goodes and Chris Judd and Bombers games record-holder Dustin Fletcher.

KEY TARGET Josh Kennedy became only the second Eagle to win the Coleman Medal, finishing the home and away season with 75 goals.
In keeping with the title of the book detailing the club’s official history, Hawthorn did it the hard way in 2015 to win its third consecutive premiership.

After being soundly beaten by West Coast in the second qualifying final at Domain Stadium, the Hawks had to overcome the in-form Crow in the second semi-final and return to Perth to defeat the Dockers, becoming the first Victorian team to win an interstate preliminary final.

There were other hurdles along the way – Jarred Roughead having a melanoma removed from his lip in July and dealing with the tragic death of assistant coach Brett Ratten’s son, Cooper, in a car accident in August. But the Hawks’ spirit de corps enabled them to triumph in the highest Grand Final on record, with the temperature hitting 31.3 degrees.

Before Hawthorn’s remarkable run, the three-peat had been achieved on only five occasions, Melbourne did it twice (1939-41 and 1955-57) and Carlton (1906-08), Collingwood (1927-30) and Brisbane Lions (2001-03) also accomplished the feat.

AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

THE PREMIERS

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Josh Kennedy became only the second West Coast Eagle to win the Coleman Medal. Despite injuring his right elbow in round five against the Giants, Kennedy played through the pain barrier and did not miss a game. He kicked goals in every game during the home and away season – the only match in which he was goalless was the Grand Final. Kennedy started the season strongly with a 10-goal haul against Carlton in round two, his best performance for the year. He booted seven against the Western Bulldogs in round 21 and had six-goal hauls against the Giants in round five and Geelong in round nine. He kicked five goals in the first two finals to finish the season with 80.55.

The key forward was selected in the All-Australian team for the first time and was named vice-captain.

Scott Cummings is the Eagles’ only previous Coleman medallist, booting 88 goals in 1999.

Nat Fyfe was a popular winner of the Brownlow Medal, becoming the first Docker to win the award. The Fremantle midfielder reversed the result from the previous season when he was runner-up to West Coast’s Matt Priddis. Polling 31 votes to win in 2015 was a remarkable effort by the Docker, given he missed four of the last six home and away games because of groin and leg injuries.

Fyfe polled 26 of a possible 30 votes between rounds four and 14. In Fremantle’s first 13 games of the season, he averaged 31.5 disposals and kicked 15 goals.

He polled his last votes (two) in round 17 against Richmond to set up an exciting finish and was able to hang on. Fyfe, the winner of the AFL Players’ Association’s MVP, finished three votes ahead of Priddis.

Fyfe set one record and equalled another on the way to his historic win. He polled 17 votes in the first eight rounds to surpass Chris Judd’s performance in 2010 when he collected 16 votes over the same period.

With nine best-on-grounds, Fyfe equalled the record of 1994 winner Greg Williams for the most three-vote matches in a season.

Fyfe hobbled to the stage to receive his medal from dual winner Gary Ablett, having fractured his left fibula early in the first preliminary final against Hawthorn.

In his acceptance speech, Fyfe captivated the audience at the Palladium at Melbourne’s Crown and on TV with his humility and humour. The midfielder returned to a hero’s welcome at his hometown of Lake Grace, Western Australia.

**MARK & GOAL OF THE YEAR**

The 2015 AFL Mark and Goal of the Year occurred on the same weekend in May.

West Coast Eagles ruckman Nic Naitanui won the Weet-Bix Mark of the Year award and Adelaide Crows small forward Eddie Betts took out the Coates Hire Goal of the Year award.

The players were presented with their prizes – $10,000 thanks to Weet-Bix and Coates Hire – during the Brownlow Medal ceremony.

Betts, who previously won the Goal of the Year award in 2006, earned four weekly nominations in 2015, but it was his effort against Fremantle in round nine in wet conditions under lights at Adelaide Oval that stood out.

Pressed hard against the boundary on the 50m arc, the veteran launched a left-foot torpedo that bounced twice before going through.

The day after Betts’ memorable goal, Naitanui took his spectacular mark against Geelong at Domain Stadium.

The Eagles star launched himself on to the shoulders of 200cm ruck partner Callum Sinclair to take the mark in the last quarter. Naitanui then goaled from an acute angle.

The winners were chosen by public voting after the All-Australian selection committee picked the three finalists for marks and goals from the 23 weekly selections.

**BROWNLOW MEDAL**

Nat Fyfe (Frem) 31
Patrick Dangerfield (Adel) 22
Matt Priddis (WCE) 28
Dustin Martin (Rich) 21
Sam Mitchell (Haw) 26
David Mundy (Frem) 19
Josh Kennedy (Syd) 25
Callan Ward (GWS) 19
Dan Hannebery (Syd) 24
Todd Goldstein (NM) 18

**LEADING GOALKICKERS 2015**

<table>
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**BROWNLOW MEDAL**

Nat Fyfe (Frem) 31
Patrick Dangerfield (Adel) 22
Matt Priddis (WCE) 28
Dustin Martin (Rich) 21
Sam Mitchell (Haw) 26
David Mundy (Frem) 19
Josh Kennedy (Syd) 25
Callan Ward (GWS) 19
Dan Hannebery (Syd) 24
Todd Goldstein (NM) 18

**LEADING GOALKICKERS 2015**

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Wood and Stringer were among 11 players picked in the All-Australian team for the first time, including 2014 Brownlow medallist Matt Priddis and Eagles teammate Andrew Gaff and defenders Michael Hurley (Essendon), Heath Shaw (Greater Western Sydney) and Josh Gibson (Hawthorn).

Another newcomer was West Coast’s Coleman medallist Josh Kennedy, who was selected at full-forward and named as vice-captain.

At the other end of the ground, Richmond full-back Alex Rance was one of only three players to win back-to-back honours. He was joined by teammates Jack Riewoldt and Brett Deledio.

Port Adelaide’s Robbie Gray was named for the second successive season, with teammate Chad Wingard on a half-forward flank.

Selectors decided to go for only one ruckman, with Kangaroos Todd Goldstein gaining the nod ahead of Eagle Nic Naitanui. Adelaide’s Patrick Dangerfield was named All-Australian for the third time and teammate Eddie Betts for the first time, while Crow’s skipper Taylor Walker was unlucky to miss out after being included in the original squad of 40.

Sydney Swan Josh Kennedy was another omission from the initial squad, while teammate Dan Hannahbe was selected on a wing.

Hawthorn, Richmond, West Coast and the Bulldogs had the most representatives with three each. Despite finishing on top of the ladder, Fremantle had only two players in the team – Brownlow medallist Nat Fyfe and David Mundy.

South Australian clubs Port Adelaide and Adelaide also had two representatives. Essendon, GWS, North Melbourne and Sydney had one apiece.

The All-Australian selection panel was Gillon McLachlan (chairman), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Mark Evans, Danny Frawley, Glen Jakovich, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson and Warren Tredrea.

Wood and Stringer were among 11 players picked in the All-Australian team for the first time.

In the frantic final minutes, a video review was required to confirm Betts’ late goal from a goalmouth scramble before Gray’s third over drew Australia within three points.

But Brogan scored a behind in the dying minutes, giving Ireland much-needed breathing space and the final whistle sounded to hand the hosts a hard-fought victory.

Disappointed Australian coach Alastair Clarkson said his team was able to control the ball and put itself into scoring positions but unable to take the chances on offer.

“We just could not convert the opportunities,” Clarkson said.

Harry Taylor was awarded the Jim Stynes Medal as the visitors’ best player for a superb display in defence.

In the International Rules Series, Australia lost the one-off Test 56-52 at Croke Park in Dublin.

Despite Australia’s second-half comeback, Ireland regained the Cormac McAnallen Trophy. In an absorbing contest, Australia came within three points with three minutes remaining after trailing by 20 points at half-time.

Inaccuracy in front of goal robbed the Australians of any chance to gain early momentum. The visitors lifted in the second half, restricting Ireland to just three overs after the main break as their defence became more organised.

Irish captain Bernard Brogan finished with four overs to win the GAA Medal as the home team’s best player, while teammate Aidan O’Shea kicked two goals.

Robbie Gray (three overs) led Australia’s attack and Harry Taylor was awarded the Jim Stynes Medal as the visitors’ best player for a superb display in defence.

After Gray scored the game’s first over, the Irish began to find space and exploit the Australians on the counter-attack.

All four of Brogan’s overs came in the first half while Ireland scored three goals – two of which were after Australian skipper Luke Hodge gave away penalties.

Sam Mitchell was controlling play in the middle while Australia’s small forwards Luke Breust, Eddie Betts and Hayden Ballantyne were dangerous.

At half-time, Australia had only one fewer scoring shot yet Ireland held a significant advantage because of its superior conversion.

In the third quarter, Nick Riewoldt brought the Australians back into the contest with two quick overs.

Andrew Gaff, Patrick Dangerfield and Dyson Heppell were winning the ball through the middle and Hodge played with great intensity as Australia restricted Ireland to only two overs in the term. But a costly turnover in the forward half cost the visitors when they had momentum.
McCLELLAND TROPHY

Fremantle created history in 2015, winning the McClelland Trophy for the first time.

Before last year’s triumph, the closest the Dockers had come to winning the trophy in 20 previous seasons was in 2006 and 2013, finishing third in both years.

Fremantle lost only five games in 2015. Two of those were on its home ground at Domain Stadium – to Richmond by 27 points in round 10 and cross-town rivals West Coast Eagles by 24 points in round 20.

The Dockers made a flying start, winning their first nine matches. Five of these were at Domain Stadium, with the biggest by 73 points over North Melbourne in round eight. Other big wins in this streak were against Geelong at Simonds Stadium in round two (44 points) and Melbourne at the MCG in round five (66 points).

After opening its loss of the season to the Tigers, Fremantle won its next three matches before capitaluting to eventual premier Hawthorn in round 15 at Aurora Stadium.

The Dockers won their next four games before losing three of their final four matches, including by 69 points against Port Adelaide in the last away round.

This gave them a 17-5 record with a percentage of 118.73, finishing two points ahead of the Eagles.

Hawthorn was third with a 16-6 record and a huge percentage of 158.4. The Sydney Swans finished with the same win-loss ratio as the Hawks, but had a substantially inferior percentage of 121.12.

Fremantle finished a game behind Hawthorn and the Swans in fifth spot with a percentage of 123.09.

AWARDS, RESULTS & FAREWELLS

FOR AGAINST % MATCH HOME AWAY FORM SCORES AV MARGIN W< L> PLS RD23 1ST 2ND 3RD 4TH QTR QTR

Retirees

Dustin Fletcher and Adam Goodes headed the retiring champions in 2015.

Fletcher, the Bombers’ games record-holder and regarded as one of the best defenders in the past 20 years, played his 400th and final game in the Dreamtime at the ‘6’ match against Richmond in round nine before succumbing to a persistent abdominal problem. He was a two-time premiership player and All-Australian and won Essendon’s best and fairest in 2000.

Goodes holds the record for the most games by a Swan and is one of the club’s most decorated players. The dual Brownlow medallist was a four-time All-Australian, three-time best and fairest winner, three-time leading goalkicker, two-time premiership player, AFL Rising Star winner in 1999 and member of the Indigenous Team of the Century.

He has become a role model for indigenous players and an advocate in the fight against racism on and off the field, which resulted in him being named Australian of the Year in 2014.

Fellow dual Brownlow medallist Chris Judd called it quits after seriously injuring his knee against Adelaide in round 10.

He won five best and fairest awards (two with West Coast, three with Carlton), was a six-time All-Australian, a Norm Smith medallist in 2005 and Eagles premiership captain in 2006.

Port Adelaide midfielder Kane Cornes hung up the boots after playing his 300th game against Richmond at Adelaide Oval. Cornes, the son of SA legend Graham and brother of former Power and GWS player Chad, was a member of Port’s first AFL premiership team in 2004 and the club’s games record-holder. He was a two-time All-Australian and four-time best and fairest winner.

The career of Paul Chapman, a key member of Geelong’s three-time premiership teams in 2007, 2009 and 2011, also came to an end.

Chapman, the 2009 Norm Smith medallist and two-time All-Australian, played his final two seasons with Essendon.


DEPARTING PLAYERS (MORE THAN 100 GAMES)

FULL NAME TEAM GAMES GOALS

AWARDS, RESULTS & FAREWELLS

END OF AN ERA

Essendon games record-holder Dustin Fletcher and dual Brownlow medallists Adam Goodes and Chris Judd were among the group of stars who retired in 2015.
FOOTBALL

2001 and playing a key role in the Brisbane Lions, Akermanis went on to become one of the game’s rare ability. He was quick and superbly fit. He kicked 335 goals (SF 49; Frem 163; NM 123), his best for the big occasions – he kicked the drought-breaking premiership goal for South Melbourne in 1920. Bell played in three clubs – North Adelaide, Norwood and Adelaide. Hammond played in three SANFL premiership teams, coached North Adelaide premiership teams, coached North Adelaide premiership teams, coached Port Adelaide premiership teams and led the Swans’ goalkicking between 1984-87 and 1989-94 and led the Swans’ goalkicking between 1995-99-99. He represented Victoria on five occasions and booted 19 goals, winning the E.J. Whitten Medal in 1995. Hammond has given more than 50 years of distingushed service to football in South Australia, where he is an icon figure at three clubs – North Adelaide, Norwood and Adelaide. Hammond played in three South Australian premiership teams, coached North Adelaide to two flags and captained both clubs. He played seven games for South Australia and coached SA to a big victory over Victoria in State of Origin football in 1983. The following season he took over as the Sydney Swans’ caretaker coach after the resignation of Ricci Quade and coached them for eight games. He was the Crow’s first premier after they were admitted to the AFL at the end of 1990 and was at the helm for their successive premierships in 1997-98. Hammond is a life member of the SANFL and AFL and a member of the SA Football Hall of Fame and Adelaide Hall of Fame, inducted in 2003 and 2009 respectively. Hammond played in the SANFL first premiership since being inducted in 2006, he is a member of the St Kilda and Sydney Swans teams of the century. He became a member of St Kilda’s Hall of Fame in 2003 and was elevated to Legend status in 2010. Lockett shared the Brownlow Medal with Hawthorn’s John Platten in 1987, also winning the AFL Players Association Most Valuable Player award that season. A six-time All-Australian, he won the Coleman Medal on four occasions. He was St Kilda’s leading goalkicker between 1984-87 and 1989-94 and led the Swans’ goalkicking between 1995-99-99. He represented Victoria on five occasions and booted 19 goals, winning the E.J. Whitten Medal in 1995.

JASON AKERMANIS

Born: February 24, 1977
Games: 325 (B 275, WB 50, V 7)
Goals: 421 (BL 307, WB 114)

A classic goal kicker, Akermanis possessed rare ability. He was quick and superbly fit. He kicked 335 goals (SF 49; Frem 163; NM 123). Bell defied the odds to make it to the AIL. The adopted son of a family in Kosmos, Western Australia, he was born in Korea, the result of a union between an Australian serviceman and a Korean woman. After suffering two broken legs as a teenager, he displayed great determination to become a footballer. In his era, goalkicking was a cottage industry. A gifted forward who became an important cog in the Swans’ success during the late 1980s and 2000s, leading up to the club’s drought-breaking premiership in 2005. Bell formed a strong combination with Tony Lockett and then with Barry Hall later in his career. Lockett was a star full-forward who achieved notoriety after his football career as a manager of several of Australia’s leading sports stars, playing a key role in the formation of World Series Cricket. The goalkicking record held by E.J. Whitten since 1953 was broken by close friend Adam Goodes in 2012. A six-time All-Australian, he won the Coleman Medal on four occasions. He was St Kilda’s leading goalkicker between 1984-87 and 1989-94 and led the Swans’ goalkicking between 1995-99-99. He represented Victoria on five occasions and booted 19 goals, winning the E.J. Whitten Medal in 1995.

MICHAEL ‘O’DOLGHIN

Born: March 1, 1976
Games: 335 games (SF 49, Frem 163, NM 123)
Goals: 308 (SF 58: Frem 130; NM 120)

Nicknamed ‘Magic’, O’Dolglin was a gifted forward who became an important cog in the Swans’ success during the late 1980s and 2000s, leading up to the club’s drought-breaking premiership in 2005. Bell formed a strong combination with Tony Lockett and then with Barry Hall later in his career. Lockett was a star full-forward who achieved notoriety after his football career as a manager of several of Australia’s leading sports stars, playing a key role in the formation of World Series Cricket. The goalkicking record held by E.J. Whitten since 1953 was broken by close friend Adam Goodes in 2012. A six-time All-Australian, he won the Coleman Medal on four occasions. He was St Kilda’s leading goalkicker between 1984-87 and 1989-94 and led the Swans’ goalkicking between 1995-99-99. He represented Victoria on five occasions and booted 19 goals, winning the E.J. Whitten Medal in 1995.
LIFE MEMBERS

SCOTT JEFFERY
The accountants umpired in the Southern Australian Junior Football League before joining the Tasmanian Football League in 1996. He officiated in the TFL Grand Final in 1997 before shifting to Victoria the following year. He joined the VFL in 1998 and umpired Grand Finals in 1999 and 2000. Jeffrey has umpired 284 AFL games, including nine finals, as well as 39 pre-season/night series games since making his AFL debut in 2001. In 2015, he umpired 22 games, including two finals – the first elimination final (Richmond-North Melbourne) and second semi-final (Hawthorn-Adeleide Crowes).

JACK TITUS AWARD

KEITH BURNS
Burns served the Collingwood, Sandringham and Northern Knights football clubs with distinction. He has been passionate about preparing young players for senior football, coaching the Collingwood under-19s between 1978-91 before going on to coach the Northern Knights in the TAC Cup between 1992-2002. He played 28 games for the Magpies between 1957-61 and was awarded life membership in 1990. Burns won the VFL’s Listed Trophy with Sandringham in 1962 and was named in the club’s Team of the Century. Since retiring as a coach he has been an administrator with AFL Victoria.

BILL KELTY
Keltty was an AFL Commissioner for 17 years until he retired in March 2015 – only Graeme Samuel (18 years) served longer on the Commission. Keltty’s commitment to community football, indigenous players and recognition of women’s roles are among his greatest achievements. He was instrumental in the establishment of AFL SportReady, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015, and has provided education and job training opportunities. He has continued his involvement in football by overseeing national review into the game’s development at all levels outside the AFL competition.

SHAWN BURGIOVE
Known as ‘Silk’ for his skills, Burgiove started his AFL career with Port Adelaide in 2002. In eight seasons with the Power, he played 157 games, being a member of the club’s first AFL premiership team in 2004. He won Port’s best and fairest award in 2006 and was All-Australian selection in the same season. He represented Australia in two International Rules Series matches in 2008. Since being traded to Hawthorn at the end of 2009, he has become a key component of the Hawks’ premiership success in 2013-15.

PAUL CHAPMAN
Champion’s match-winning performance in the gripping 2009 Grand Final win over St Kilda will live long in the memories of Geelong fans, the solid midfielder/forward being rewarded with the Norm Smith Medal for his three goals and 26 disposals. He was a key member of the Cats’ premiership teams in 2007, 2009 and 2011, won All-Australian honours in 2009 and 2010 and won the club best and fairest in 2006. After 14 seasons with Geelong, he was traded to Essendon at the end of 2013 and played his final two seasons with the Bombers.

BRENDON GODDARD
The top pick in the 2002 National Draft has been a fine contributor with two clubs, St Kilda and Essendon. The midfielder played in the Saints’ Grand Finals in 2009 and 2010, his spectacular mark in the draw against Collingwood being a memorable moment. He was an All-Australian in 2009 and 2010. At the end of 2012, he transferred as a restricted free agent to Essendon and had an impact immediately, winning the best and fairest in 2013. With the help of skipper Jobe Watson unavailable, Goddard will lead the Bombers in 2016.

JAMES KELLY
Kelly was one of Geelong’s most reliable players over 14 seasons, being a key member of the Cats’ premiership successes in 2007, 2009 and 2011. He was an All-Australian in 2011 and third in the best and fairest in 2010. Kelly represented Australia in two International Rules Series matches in 2011, winning the Jim Stynes Medal. He was given a farewell game in front of the Geelong faithful in the final round of 2015, but was ruled out of retirement by Essendon in 2016 and signed as a top-up player.

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OBITUARIES

KEN WHIFFEN

Whiffen, a long-time trainer, mentor, confidante and friend to generations of St Kilda players, died on January 10, 2015, aged 87. He was a well-respected figure in the Saints’ rooms since 1965, was a good friend of premiership coach the late Allan Jeans, and helped with the running duties when St Kilda won its only flag in 1966. Season 2014 marked his 50th year at the club and during that time was made a life member (1987). He also won the AFL’s Jack Titus Recognition of Service award (2007).

HARRY GORDON

Gordon, CMG, AM, was one of Australia’s most distinguished newspaper executives, sports writers and sports historians. He died on the Gold Coast on January 21, 2015, aged 95, with The Sun-News-Pictorial and Editor-in-Chief of the Herald and Weekly Times and Queensland Newspapers. Gordon, a war correspondent during the Korean War in the 1950s, had a passion for sport, particularly the Olympics and Australian Football. His No. 1 football love was Hawthorn and he wrote the club’s history, The Hard Way. Several of his 15 books were on the Olympics and he was recognised by the international body with many awards. He was an inaugural member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee from 1996 to his retirement in 2008.

LANCE MANN

Mann was an Essendon speedster who won Australia’s premier professional sprint event, the Stawell Gift. He won at Ballarat in 1969 and Launceston in 1970. He was recruited from the Victorian western district town Casterton and after his VFL career moved to Tasmania where he was captain-coach (and later president) of East Devonport. Richard, who returned to Victoria, was always known as ‘Bull’ because of his robust, bull-like physique.

GEOFF TUNBRIDGE

Tunbridge, one of Melbourne’s greatest half-forward flankers, died at Ballarat in country Victoria on March 23, 2015, aged 82. Tunbridge was 25 when he made his debut with Melbourne in 1957 and quickly made his presence felt, playing in a premiership team under coach Norm Smith that year, and again in 1959 and 1960. He was a wizard in the position often referred to as a ‘starvator corner’ and while he wasn’t as physically powerful as most of his opponents, he had the uncanny skills to disrupt backlines. Tunbridge also played in the losing 1958 Grand Final team against Collingwood and when he bowed out in 1963 had played 117 games from a possible 119. Tunbridge was a long-time teacher at Ballarat Grammar where he coached the football team. The main oval at the school was named in his honour in 1996.

NICK RICHARDSON

Richardson, who died aged 74 on March 17, 2015, was an integral part of Richmond’s drought-breaking premiership team in 1967. The barrel-chested ruck-rouser is best remembered on the field for his sweeping handball out of packs that repeatedly opened up scoring avenues for his attacking teammates. Richardson, father of Richmond’s 282-game player, Matthew, played 103 games for the Tigers from 1959-69 and seven with South Melbourne from 1969-70. He was recruited from the Victorian western district town Casterton and after his VFL career moved to Tasmania where he was captain-coach (and later president) of East Devonport. Richard, who returned to Victoria, was always known as ‘Bull’ because of his robust, bull-like physique.

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GEOFF MCGIVERN

McGivern, a key-position player in Melbourne for much of the 1950s and 1960s, died on August 15, 2014, aged 84. McGivern was recruited from Croydon, where he played in a premiership team, and made his senior debut with Melbourne in 1950. He went on to play 105 games, kick 53 goals and be a member of the 1955 premiership side after playing in the losing Grand Final team in 1954. McGivern won the best and fairest in 1952 and is remembered as a prominent centre half-forward/centre half-back. McGivern suffered bad knee injuries and retired from the VFL after the 1964 season. He retired to Croydon as coach in 1958-59.

COLEN YOUREN

Youren, who died on July 9, 2015, aged 87, was a member of the Hawthorn team which finally brought a premiership to the club in 1961. Youren, an outstanding athlete from Scotch College in Melbourne, was on the wing beside crack centreman Brenda. He was in the 43-point win over Footscray. Two years later, Youren was also on the wing in the Grand Final when the Hawks lost to Geelong. Youren, a Hawthorn life member and son of Collingwood player George Youren, played 135 games from 1958-65 and represented Victoria five times.

STEVEN PHILLIPS

A prominent sports media all-rounder, Phillips succumbed to a brain tumour on March 25, 2015, aged 62. For more than 40 years, Phillips was a popular figure around the sporting scene, having worked as a journalist on The Sun-News-Pictorial, The Australian and The Age. He then went into television with Channel Seven and Channel Nine. At Seven, he was involved in the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games. Phillips was well known as an MC at sports functions and in recent years ran his own sports video production company. His first love was football and some of his best work was interviewing the stars at the Sport Australia Hall of Fame’s annual induction dinners. Phillips also helped establish the VFL Football Writers’ Association, now the Australian Football Media Association. At the time of his passing, he was a member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee.

GRAHAM GILCHRIST

Gilchrist, a true-blue Carlton wingman in the 1950s and early 1960s, died on July 24, 2015, aged 82. Gilchrist, educated at Coburg High School, captained the Carlton under-19s to the premiership in 1953, played in the reserves premiership in 1953 and went on to play 34 senior games from 1952-61.

TONY HAENEN

Haenem, a ruckman/defender for South Melbourne, died on July 9, 2015, aged 69. Haenem was a product of Mildura Imperials in Victoria’s north-west and had to choose between South Melbourne and Footscray before settling for the Swans. He played 93 games from 1966-71 and was a member of South’s drought-breaking finals team in 1970. He was awarded the North Melbourne’s Jimmy Thomson Medal in 1970. Haenem was a member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

SYD TATE

Geelong lost another of its 1951 premiership players with Tate’s death on May 13, 2015, aged 76. Tate, who previously played for Victorian country club Yallourn, was a strong and pacy wingman who formed a great centreline with Leo Tumer and Terry Fulton when the Cats won the 1951 Grand Final against Essendon. Tate made his senior debut in 1950 and his 101st game, his last, was in 1959. Tate was captain-coach of Wagga in 1952, then returned to Victoria to coach Geelong reserves side in 1953-54. He also helped Geelong’s recruiting program.

ALLAN CATIONS

Cations, a regular member of the Richmond backline in the 1950s, died on May 21, 2015, aged 82. Recruited from South Victoria, he played his best football at full-back from 1952-57 and 1959, finishing with 102 games. In 1958, he was captain and coach of Victorian country club Port Fairy before returning to the Tigers. Cations also helped Richmond as a recruiting officer and was a member of the committee that saw Werribee gain entry into the Victorian Football Association.

BOB JOHNSON

Johnson, generally regarded as the best full-back in Melbourne’s history, died on October 29, 2015, aged 77. Known as ‘Tassie’ Johnson, hailed from North Launceston and played 202 games between 1959-69. His opening years at Melbourne (after standing out of football for a season waiting on a clearance) brought plenty of success with premiership in 1959, 1960 and 1964. He also played finals in 1961-63. Johnson was selected at full-back in the Demons’ Team of the Century and in Tasmania’s team of the 1954-66 era. He played for Victoria on 12 occasions and captained Melbourne in his final season of 1966. Later he was captain-coach of Box Hill in the VFA.

MICK TWOMEY

Twomey, part of a famous family at Collingwood, died on December 14, 2015. Twomey was one of three brothers to play senior football with three of the four playing for Collingwood. Bill, Pat and Mick – played in the same premier team in 1953. Their father Bill snr was also a Collingwood player and a member of the 1899 premiership team. Twomey, who was born in Ararat in country Victoria, played his early football with Heidelberg YCW and made his senior debut with the Magpies in 1951 in a League career that spanned until 1981 and included 157 games. The ruckman played in Collingwood’s 1951 and 1956 Grand Final side and was a member of the losing side in 1955 and 1960 Grand Final teams. Twomey is a Magpie life member and is in the club’s Hall of Fame.
The AFL’s net surplus of $2.5 million was on budget and all revenue streams have increased on last year’s results.

**AFL CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS**

The AFL recorded a net surplus of $2.5 million for the 2015 financial year. The result, while down on 2014, was on budget. Pleasingly, all revenue streams were up on last year. Increases in distributions to clubs and the AFL Players’ Association were the main factors to the overall result being down on 2014.

The consolidated result, which includes all of the AFL’s controlled state subsidiaries, produced a net surplus of $3.6 million. All state subsidiaries, except for AFL Northern Territory, recorded operating surpluses. AFLNT utilised its retained earnings to assist with the funding of the Michael Long Life Learning Centre. →

DYNAMIC DOG

After a stellar debut season in 2014, young gun Marcus Bontempelli was one of the driving forces behind the Western Bulldogs’ return to finals action in 2015.
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

The AFL is continuously striving to add value across the AFL industry by centralising support services, investing in technology and implementing leading solutions and programs. The AFL continued to invest in the development of its Risk Management and Insurance programs, resulting in an increase of standards for all 18 clubs. At a community level, the programs have delivered a level of cover for serious injuries such as quadriplegia and paraplegia of up to $1 million. This is double the 2014 level of cover.

The centralised services and solutions provided by the AFL to the industry also include accounting, information technology and procurement. State football bodies and the clubs have access to these services and have benefited through the adoption of these services and technologies. These include payroll services, sponsorship and events systems and travel and accommodation arrangements. The annual Club Financial Review was completed, providing valuable benchmarking data and trend analysis for the AFL and the clubs. In addition to the collection of annual data, the AFL in recent years has focused on the collection of longer-term forecast information to assist with strategy and planning for the industry.

PAYMENTS TO AFL CLUBS

The AFL makes a number of distributions and payments to AFL clubs. These payments included the following in 2015:

- A base distribution to all clubs which totalled $472.0 million, an increase of $6.8 million.
- A bonus distribution of $1.2 million to all clubs from the broadcast rights proceeds.
- Other payments to clubs included equal and unequal financial assistance, prize money, distribution of the AFL’s signage rights at Etihad Stadium and promotional funding to help clubs develop the game around Australia.

OUTLOOK

With the media rights arrangements for 2017–22 having been finalised in August 2015, work is progressing on the AFL industry’s future funding model. A long-term investment-based funding model that looks beyond the six-year media rights payment arrangements will be worked through with industry participants throughout 2016. This model will be designed to put in place a sustainable industry funding framework based on a rightsized cost base for the industry while providing the capacity to also have available funding for long-term investment requirements.
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 2015 and the auditor’s report thereon.

The Directors of the Company at any time during or since the end of the financial year are:

Mr M C Fitzpatrick – Chairman
Appointed Commissioner, Chairman from March 2007
Chairman of Remuneration Committee
Member of Audit Committee
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Engineering (Hons.) (University of Western Australia)
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) (Oxford University, UK)
Experience:
- Director, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research
- Chairman, Pacific Current Group Limited
- Former Director, Rio Tinto Limited/Plc
- Director, Infrastructure Capital Group Pty Ltd
- Director, Carnegie Ltd
- Director, Creswick Quartz Pty Ltd
- Director, Latam Autos Ltd
- Director, Carlton Football Club 1975–1983
- Director, Carlton Football Club 1989–1995
- Founder and Managing Director, Hastings Fund Management Ltd, 1994–2005

Mr G A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer
Appointed 5th June 2014
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Commerce (University of Adelaide)
- Bachelor of Law (Hons.) (University of Melbourne)
Experience:
- AFL General Manager Commercial Operations 2003–2006
- AFL General Manager Broadcasting & Major Projects 2006–2008
- AFL Chief Operating Officer 2008–2012
- AFL Deputy CEO 2012–2014
- Patron, Children’s Cancer Foundation

Mr W J Kelty – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 1999 – Resigned 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Architecture (University of Melbourne)
Experience:
- Director, Newmark Capital Pty Ltd
- Director, Panorama Capital Pty Ltd
- Former CEO Retail Projects, Mirvac Group
- Member, AFL (now AFL) Commission 1998–2004

Ms S J Mostyn – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 2005
Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Arts (Australian University)
- Bachelor of Law (Australian University)
Experience:
- Chair, Gitegroup Pty Limited
- Chair, Carriage Works Australia
- President, Australian Council for International Development
- Non Executive Director, Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd
- Non Executive Director, Transurban Holdings Ltd
- Non Executive Director, Cover-More Insurance
- Non Executive Director, Mirvac
- Non Executive Director, GO Foundation
- Non Executive Director, Climate/Works Australia

The Honourable L Dessau, AM – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 2008 – Resigned 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Law (Hons.) (University of Melbourne)
Experience:
- Former Justice of the Family Court of Australia
- Children’s Court Magistrate, Coroner and Magistrate 1978–1995
- Director, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
- Former Director, AFL SportsReady Pty Ltd
- Chair, Melbourne Festival
- Trustee, National Gallery of Victoria
- Director, Unicom Foundation
- Director, Bangeria Pty Ltd

Mr R Goyder, AO – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed November 2011
Member of Audit Committee
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Commerce (University of Western Australia)
Experience:
- Director, Wesfarmers Limited
- Director, Gresham Partners Holdings Limited
- Director, Business Council of Australia
- Director, UWA Business School Advisory Board
- Former Director, Fremantle Football Club

Mr P Bassat – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed November 2011
Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Law, Bachelor of Commerce (University of Melbourne)
Experience:
- Co-founder and former CEO, SEEK Limited 1997–2011
- Director, Square Peg Capital Pty Ltd
- Director, Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation
- Member, Mount Scopus College Foundation
- Director, Wesfarmers Ltd
- Director, WEBE Pty Ltd
- Director, The Prince’s Charities Australia
- Director, AFL SportsReady Pty Ltd
- Director, PropertyGuru Pte Ltd

Mr K Williams, AM – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed February 2014
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Music (The University of Sydney)
- Honorary Doctorate of Letters (Macquarie University)
Experience:
- Board Member, University of Western Sydney Foundation
- Board Member, Myer Foundation
- Board Member, NSW State Library Foundation
- Board Member, Australian Music Foundation
- Board Member, Australian Grape and Wine Authority
- Director, Executive Channel International
- Chair, Copyright Agency

Major General S Wilkie AM – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Human Resource Management (University of New England)
- Graduate Diploma of Telecommunications Systems Management (Swinburne University of Technology)
- Graduate Diploma of Strategic Studies (Deakin University)
- Master of Defence Studies (University of Canberra)
- Advanced Management Program (Harvard Business School)
Experience:
- Head of ADF Joint Enablers & Commander, Australian Defence College
- Chief of Staff to the Chief of Army
- National Commander ADF commitment in Afghanistan
- Director General Training
- Member of the Order of Australia
- Awarded a Bronze Star (United States) for service in Iraq
- Awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in Afghanistan
- Patron, ADF Women’s Australian Rules Association
- Patron, ADF Hockey Association
- Chair, ADF Sports Council

Mr J Ball – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
- Bachelor of Arts (Monash University, New England)
- Bachelor of Business (Sydney University, New England)
Experience:
- Senior Relationship Manager, Macquarie Equities (Macquarie Group)
- Director, Sydney Swans Football Club 2007–2015
- Player, Sydney Swans Football Club 2000–2005
- Player, West Coast Eagles Football Club 1992–1999
II. STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE

The Company’s strategy is to promote the AFL brand throughout Australia and to a limited extent outside Australia. Key Performance indicators such as: attendances at AFL games, television ratings, digital consumption and participant numbers are used to measure the Company’s performance against this strategy.

II. REVIEW AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

The operating profit of the AFL and its controlled entities was $3.6 million, compared with an operating profit of $13.3 million in 2014.

II. STATE OF AFFAIRS

In the opinion of the Directors there were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity that occurred during the financial year under review not otherwise disclosed in this report or the consolidated financial statements.

II. 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.

II. LIKELY DEVELOPMENTS

The Directors do not anticipate any major changes in the basis of operations of the Consolidated Entity and the future results of those operations in subsequent financial years. However, a new Broadcast Rights deal has been negotiated and agreed for 2017-22 financial years. The new Broadcast Rights deal has increased by a material amount and forms a major part of the investment-based industry funding model to be implemented from 2017 onwards.

II. INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Since the end of the previous financial year the Company has paid insurance premiums in respect of Directors’ and Officers’ liability and legal expenses, insurance contracts, 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:

Æ Costs and expenses that may be incurred by the relevant officers in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal and whatever their outcome; and
Æ 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.

II. DIRECTORS’ BENEFITS

Since the end of the previous financial year no Director of the Company has received or become entitled to receive any benefit (other than the fixed salary of a full-time employee of the Company or of a related body corporate) by reason of a contract made by the Company, its controlled entities, or a related body corporate with a Director or with a firm of which a Director is a member, or with an entity in which a Director has a substantial interest other than as disclosed in notes 20 and 21 of the annual financial report.

II. LEAD AUDITOR’S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT 2001

The Lead Auditor’s Independence Declaration is set out on this page and forms part of the Directors’ report for the year ended 31 October 2015.

II. PARENT ENTITY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A concise set of Parent Entity Financial Statements has been included alongside the Concise Consolidated Financial Statements in accordance with the option available to the Company under the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) Class Order 10/654 issued on 26 July 2010.

II. ROUNding OFF

The Company is of a kind referred to in ASIC Class Order 98/100 dated 10 July 1998 and in accordance with that Class Order, amounts in the financial report and Directors’ report have been rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Dated at Melbourne this 15th day of February 2016.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:

Mr M C Fitzpatrick
Chairman

Mr G A McLachlan
Director
Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

The consolidated operating profit in 2015 was $3.6 million which compared with an operating profit of $13.3 million in 2014. Consolidated revenue increased by $30.4 million to $558.7 million.

There were five main areas of revenue which contributed to this movement:

- An increase in commercial operations revenue totalling $17.9 million
- An increase in game development revenue totalling $0.3 million
- An increase in various other sundry revenues totalling $0.1 million
- An increase in commercial operations revenue totalling $17.9 million
- An increase in distributions to clubs totalling $26.8 million

Total comprehensive income in the year was $110.6 million which compared with $430.8 million in the previous year.

Consolidated expenditure increased by $40.1 million to $555.6 million. The main areas of expenditure which contributed to this movement were:

- An increase in distributions to clubs totalling $26.8 million
- An increase in AFL company commercial operations expenditure totalling $6.7 million
- An increase in AFL company game development expenditure totalling $2.4 million
- An increase in shared services expenditure totalling $16.6 million
- An increase in donations expenditure totalling $0.4 million
- An increase in finance & administration and other sundry expenses totalling $3.5 million
- An increase in new markets expenditure totalling $3.2 million
- An increase in facility development expenditure totalling $2.0 million
- An increase in subsidiaries’ consolidated expenditure totalling $1.3 million

Net income for the year is attributable to equity holders of the Company $116.5 million.

Other comprehensive income for the year was $2.2 million.

Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year was $82.2 million.

Net cash used in investing activities $5.1 million.

Net cash from financing activities $2.2 million.

Cash flows from operating activities $23.0 million.

Net cash used in investing activities $23.0 million.

Net cash from financing activities $2.2 million.

Net cash used in investing activities $23.0 million.

Net cash from financing activities $2.2 million.

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Net cash from financing activities $2.2 million.

Net cash used in investing activities $23.0 million.

Net cash from financing activities $2.2 million.
3. Contingent Liabilities

I. The Company has entered into an agreement with the AFL Players’ Association Inc. for a period of five years commencing on 1 November 2015 whereby the Company has an obligation to assume liability for all amounts due to players of a club where the club has lost its licence to compete in the AFL competition and is suspended from or loses its right to representation in the League. The amounts payable in these circumstances will be offset by any amounts payable to the players in respect of future employment as a player.

II. The Company has entered into an agreement with Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (“ANZ Bank”) where the Company guarantees the obligations of Sports Facilities Management Limited (“Sports”) to the ANZ Bank with respect to Sports’ borrowings of $5.0 million in relation to the reconfiguration of Stadium Australia.

III. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Carlton Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

IV. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.4 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

V. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the North Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $3.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

VI. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the St Kilda Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $6.75 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

VII. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Essendon Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $6.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

VIII. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Brisbane Bears-Fitzroy Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $8.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

IX. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Essendon Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 30 October 2017.

X. The Company has entered into an agreement with Beyond Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Port Adelaide Football Club Limited to Beyond Bank to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 March 2017.

XI. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFL Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $1.41 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFL Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $1.59 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2017.

XIII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Western Sydney Football Club Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $3.66 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XIV. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.35 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XV. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL Queensland Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.10 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XVI. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL (NSW/VCT) Commission Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.35 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XVII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL Northern Territory Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.15 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XVIII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of Football Tasmania Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.03 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

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.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors:

Mr M C Fitzpatrick
Chairman

Mr G A McLachlan
Director
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Report on the concise financial report
We have audited the accompanying concise financial report of the Consolidated Entity comprising the Australian Football League (the Company) and the entities it controlled at the year’s end or from time to time during the financial year which comprises the statements of financial position as at 31 October 2015, the statements of profit and loss and other comprehensive income, statements of changes in equity and statements of cash flows for the year then ended and related notes 1 to 5 derived from the audited financial report of the Consolidated Entity for the year ended 31 October 2015 and the discussion and analysis. The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards and accordingly, reading the concise financial report is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report.

Directors’ responsibility for the concise financial report
The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the concise financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports and the Corporations Act 2001 and for such internal control as the directors determine are necessary to enable the preparation of the concise financial report.

Auditor’s responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the concise financial report based on our audit procedures which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standards ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Standards. We have conducted an independent audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, of the financial report of the Australian Football League for the year ended 31 October 2015. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the financial report in our report dated 15 February 2016. The Australian Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report for the year is free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the concise financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgement, including the risk of material misstatement of the concise financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation of the concise financial report in order to design procedures, that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal control. Our procedures included testing that the information in the concise financial report is derived from, and is consistent with, the financial report for the year, and examination on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts, discussion and analysis, and other disclosures which were not directly derived from the financial report for the year. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the concise financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports and whether the discussion and analysis complies with the requirements laid down in Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence
In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

Auditor’s opinion
In our opinion, the concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis, of the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended 31 October 2015 complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

KPMG
Melbourne
15th February 2016

M Bisetto
Partner

FLYING BOMBER
Brendon Goddard makes a spectacular attempt to mark in the traditional Anzac Day game against Collingwood. The match between the arch rivals attracted a bumper crowd of 88,395 at the MCG.
COMMITTEES AND ADVISORS

AFL Audit Committee
Chris Langford (Chair), Mike Fitzpatrick, Richard Goyder

AFL Broadcasting Committee
Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Mike Fitzpatrick, Paul Bassat, Kim Williams

AFL Remuneration Committee
Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Sam Mostyn, Paul Bassat

AFL Nominations Committee
Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Richard Goyder, Peggy O’Neal, David Koch

AFL Executive Committee
Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Travis Auld, Darren Birch, Peter Campbell, Andrew Dillon, Mark Evans, Ray Gunston, Simon Lethlean, Elizabeth Lukin, Tony Peek

AFL Football Operations Sub-Committee
General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans (chairman), Wayne Campbell, Patrick Clifton, Simon Gor, Emily Groves, Patrick Keane, Jennie Loughnan, Ben Lowe, Tom McCoy, Tessie McManus, Michael Poulton, Scott Taylor, Vicki Lloyd (secretary)

AFL Tribunal
David Jones (Chair), Ross Howie (deputy chairman), Daniel Harford, Stewart Loewe, David Pittman, Wayne Schimmelbusch, Richard Loveridge, Wayne Herwood, Michael Sexton, Shane Wakelin, Paul Williams, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Laws Of The Game Committee
General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans (Chair), Brett Burton, Wayne Campbell, Michael Christian, Chris Fagan, Tom Harley, Hayden Kennedy, Leigh Matthews, Guy McKenna, Michael Poulton, Ian Prendergast, Jack Riewoldt, Jack Trengove, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

Appeals Board
Peter O’Callaghan QC (Chair), Brian Collins QC (deputy chairman), Brian Bourke, Michael Green, Stephen Junca, John Schultz, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

Match Review Panel
Luke Ball, Nathan Burke, Michael Christian, Brad Sewell, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Grievance Tribunal
Professor Geoffrey Giudice AO (Chair), Murray Kellam AO (deputy chairman), David Maddocks, Michael Moncrieff, Kevin Power

AFL Legal Counsel
Jeff Gleeson QC, Nick Pane QC, Andrew Woods

Virgin Australia All-Australian & NAB AFL Rising Star Selectors
Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Mark Evans, Danny Frawley, Glen Jakovich, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson, Kevin Sheehan (NAB AFL Rising Star only), Warren Tredrea, Tom McCoy (secretary)

AFL Research Board
Michael Poulton (Chair), Dr David Buttifant, Matt Finnis, Brett Johnson, Dr Peter Harcourt, Dr Michael Makdissi, Assoc Prof Colin McLeod, David Rath, Dr Anthony Schache, Lawrie Woodman, John Worsfold, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Concussion Working Group
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