



ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN
FOOTBALL CLUBS

5 Years of the NPL: A Clubs' Perspective

A Report by the AAFC on behalf of NPL Clubs

May 2018

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GLOSSARY

AAFC	Association of Australian Football Clubs Ltd	NCR	National Competition Review
AFC	Asian Football Confederation	NPL	National Premier Leagues
ECL	Elite Club Licences	NYL	National Youth League
FFA	Football Federation Australia Ltd	PPS	Player Points System
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association	SAP	Skill Acquisition Program
HAL	Hyundai A-League	WOFP	Whole of Football Plan
MF	Member Federations of FFA	WPL	Women’s Premier League

I Executive Summary

I.1 Background

The inception of the National Premier Leagues (NPL) has represented a significant shift in the role and function of community owned, volunteer-operated football clubs.

For almost 130 years beforehand, the principal purpose and objective of clubs was focussed solely on the interests of its members and volunteers. While there are differences amongst clubs, their overwhelming focus was, and remains, in competing as successfully as they can in various “State League” competitions.

The formation of the NPL was an outcome of the 2012 National Competitions Review (NCR). It was intended to form the national second tier of football in Australia by Football Federation Australia (FFA) before establishing it. Yet it was the clubs upon whom the workload was placed to discharge the functions and objectives of the NPL. Almost simultaneously, although separately, the national FFA Cup competition commenced in 2014 and it was also immediately crucially dependent on the NPL Clubs for its success and its development into the mature and widely embraced competition it has become.

One objective of the NPL has been to define a more structured role for clubs in elite player development in the “Elite Pathway” (refer Appendix A). Further, the NCR outcomes sought to address some key issues facing clubs and, through the mechanism of Elite Club Licencing (ECL), to provide solutions to those issues. However, this was only one of three objectives for which the NPL was created:

- 1. Strengthen elite player development.**
- 2. Ensure the sustainability of league competitions; and**
- 3. Create value and connect more deeply with the Football Community;**

Now into the sixth year of the NPL in most regions, there are 172 member owned, not-for-profit clubs involved in a mix of senior and youth NPL competitions for men, women, boys and girls across Australia. Collectively, these NPL clubs have well over 30,000 registered senior, junior, male and female players, they are responsible for player payments in excess of \$25million annually and additional significant football-related costs while contributing over \$9million in licence and registration fees to FFA and MFs.

Although these 172 clubs are part of the national second tier competitions, they differ markedly in terms of a range of measures and factors, including numbers of teams, revenue and expenditure (including on players), sponsorship, facilities, membership, and community football involvement. In short, they are not a homogeneous group.

I.2 Overall Report Findings

This report has been developed by the AAFC for and on behalf of its NPL club members. The report represents the collected and collated outcomes arising from feedback and consultations with our member clubs. The culmination of the feedback process was a national ‘roadshow’ of meetings with NPL clubs in each state/territory/region in which the NPL operates.

The findings detailed later in this report, identify areas in which NPL clubs believe have shown a measure of success but also areas in which there are clear and deep-seated issues and concerns regarding the ‘on the ground’ impact of the manner in which the NPL competitions have developed over the past 5 years.

In overall terms, the main conclusions arising from this report are that the:

- 1. NPL was established with a positive intent which remains broadly supported by most of the football family. It has been funded and driven by member owned community clubs upon whose volunteer base has been placed the time and cost burden of 'on the ground' implementation and operation of the NPL;**
- 2. Implementation has been inconsistent, lacked cohesion and has been undertaken in siloed manner by MFs with little apparent co-ordination and consistency. with the view amongst clubs that the original objectives and issues the NPL was established to achieve and overcome have lost visibility;**
- 3. Notion of "elite" has been diluted by the initial large number and rapid expansion in the number of NPL clubs and the inclusion of HAL teams in youth and senior NPL competitions;**
- 4. Original stated objectives for the NPL arising from the NCR are not being met, and therefore a 'disconnect' exists between NPL Clubs, the FFA and MFs. The NPL Clubs are increasingly and alarmingly disillusioned with the direction and their role on the NPL;**
- 5. Depth and breadth of the NPL Clubs, notwithstanding their disillusionment represent a significant 'product' with their extensive player, volunteer and supporter base and their facilities. A 'product' whose marketing and development potential remains largely untapped.**

Notwithstanding this report's overall conclusion, there are important aspects of the NPL about which the consensus among Clubs is that they have made a positive and lasting contribution enhancing the development of football in Australia. These are:

1. Intent of the NCR Outcomes and objectives for the NPL

- Clubs expressed an understanding and, indeed, support for the intent of the NPL (refer above) and the consequent ECL criteria. An intent to raise overall standards of club management to support enhanced player development and the standard of football in Australia.

2. Singular national brand – "NPL"

- There was strong and consistent feedback from NPL clubs supporting the singular national brand – National Premier Leagues. Further, the NPL Finals Series provides a national link for the various state-based NPL competitions.

3. FFA Cup

- Similarly, the FFA Cup is, for the most part, supported as a very positive initiative for the development and popularity of football. Feedback from NPL clubs was that this competition provides clubs the opportunity to play against HAL teams, creates potential for major match days and overall, it helps bring the football family together.

4. Standard of Youth Coaching

- In general, NPL clubs reported that there has been an overall improvement in the standard of youth coaching since the inception of the NPL. There is a consensus that the licencing of coaches and focus on youth development has made a positive contribution to the development of youth players.

There are five broad areas of concern which NPL clubs have identified as contributing to the fundamental disconnection between clubs and the FFA/MFs:

- *Diverging Club and FFA objectives;*
- *Lack of consultation with clubs;*
- *Dilution of Contribution to Elite Pathway;*
- *Consistent Inconsistency in ECL Criteria; and*
- *Financial and time burden on Clubs and Parents.*

In more specific terms, it is considered this disconnection has resulted in the outcomes from the NCR not addressing the key issues identified in the NCR:

Issue recognised in NCR	Report findings
<p>1. Clubs don't feel part of the development pathway</p>	<p>While the Elite Pathway Model recognises the role of clubs (refer Appendix A), there is a consensus view that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the training compensation scheme does not reward clubs for their role in the pathway (refer point 4 below); b. the pathway has become the predominant definition of the purpose of clubs at the expense of their own aspirations; c. expansion of HAL Club academies to younger age groups.
<p>2. Clubs don't have the capability to deliver consistently high quality development programs</p>	<p>Issues raised by clubs which hinder these programs, include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. high cost of coaching programs in terms of both fees and time; b. large number of clubs which is diluting the effectiveness of programs; c. differences across 172 NPL Clubs in terms of resources, facilities and volunteer support to effectively and consistently deliver programs.
<p>3. Clubs paying unsustainably high wages to players</p>	<p>With few exceptions, player payments have increased markedly, notwithstanding the introduction of the PPS. Further, there is inconsistency in the elements of the PPS and the total allowable points across each state/region</p>
<p>4. Clubs feel players are taken away from them for the benefit of FFA or A-League clubs without adequate compensation</p>	<p>The functioning of the training compensation scheme attracted the most vehement of critical feedback from clubs, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. lack of clarity on the functioning of the system; b. lack of active support from FFA and/or MFs; c. significant delay in payment of compensation.
<p>5. Many clubs are charging high fees to junior and youth players</p>	<p>Consistent feedback is that the current model cannot be sustained where no money filters down from the top of the pyramid to non-professional competitions, as all the cost pressures are on grassroots, parents & volunteers to maintain the community and NPL competitions. The view expressed ever-increasingly by many club administrators and coaches is that football has become a "rich man's sport".</p>
<p>6. Inconsistency in the structure of second tier leagues across each state</p>	<p>Despite the intention to create uniform ECL criteria, the reality is that the criteria is far from consistent. The positive is that in many cases the differences result from a recognition of local characteristics. However, upon closer analysis, what is revealed is a number of differences which are more "fundamental", and it is not apparent why they have not been more consistently applied.</p>

1.3 Initial Recommendations

For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.

Henry Louis Mencken (1880-1956)

Put differently, the above quote is a reminder there is no 'silver bullet' action which will resolve the issues and concerns raised in this report. Accordingly, the recommendations below are deliberately termed "Initial Recommendations" as the issues and concerns raised by clubs in this report need to be further examined through a more comprehensive process. Moreover, they must be further examined in a holistic manner – both in terms of the matters to be considered and in doing so, the involvement and consultation of key stakeholders.

This report makes three (3) broad and inter-related recommendations:

<p>1. Retain and Improve the NPL</p>	<p>As discussed further in this report, there is a consensus amongst clubs which values being part of a national competition. Further, there is general support for the overarching objectives and intent of the NPL with clubs willing to make their contribution to the extent of their capabilities and to the extent their role is sustainable.</p>
<p>2. Undertake a comprehensive national review of the NPL</p>	<p>The FFA to form and lead a working group representative of the key stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive review of the NPL. In broad terms, this review should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The evaluation of the extent to which the NCR objectives for the NPL (refer Figure 1 on Section 2) have been met and the factors which have hindered their achievement; b. A detailed investigation and understanding of the capabilities and objectives across the broad spectrum of the 172 NPL clubs; c. The assessment of the impact of the ECL criteria on clubs, their volunteers and youth player parents; d. Identification of the aspects of the ECL criteria which are hindering the longer term financial sustainability of clubs; e. Consideration of the developments in football in Australia since the inception of the NPL, including, but not limited to, the expansion and impact of both HAL team academies and private academies; f. Consideration of the impact the proposed national second division may have on the NPL competitions and clubs; g. The restatement or reformulation of the NPL objectives and its 'position' in the football ecosystem consequent upon a full consideration of all the above factors (and other relevant issues which might be identified); h. The development of a comprehensive 10 year NPL Strategy;
<p>3. Singular national management by FFA with a NPL National Standing Committee</p>	<p>Following the completion of the review, FFA be directly responsible for the overall direction and oversight of the NPL, while implementation may be left to the MFs. Ideally, governance of the NPL at its various levels and locations will be supported by the formation of a permanent NPL National Standing Committee (NPLNSC). The NPLNSC will support the effective and consistent implementation of the NPL Strategy across all MF regions and assist to address issues and concerns as and wherever they arise.</p> <p>It will also play an important role in informing the AAFC in its representation of NPL Clubs in the governance structures at state and national level following the completion of the work to shortly be undertaken by the Congress Review Working Group (CRWG) which has been recently established at the direction of FIFA. The NPLNSC will be drawn from a representative range NPL stakeholders responsible for its delivery throughout Australia.</p>

2 Context for this Report

2.1 NPL Clubs

Football Clubs have always been, and continue to be, at the heart of football in Australia since the 1870s. State based football competitions have existed since 1885 with most being formed well over 100 years ago:

1885	1886	1893	1896	1900	1903	1909	1926
NSW	NNSW	QLD	WA	TAS	SA	VIC	ACT

The vast majority of what are now NPL clubs, were also involved in the various 'State Leagues' which existed as the top level of football in each MF region until the inception of the NPL.

In the winter 2018 season, there are now 172 member-owned, not-for-profit clubs involved in a mix of senior and youth competitions for men, women, boys and girls across Australia. A listing of these clubs is included at table I on the following page:

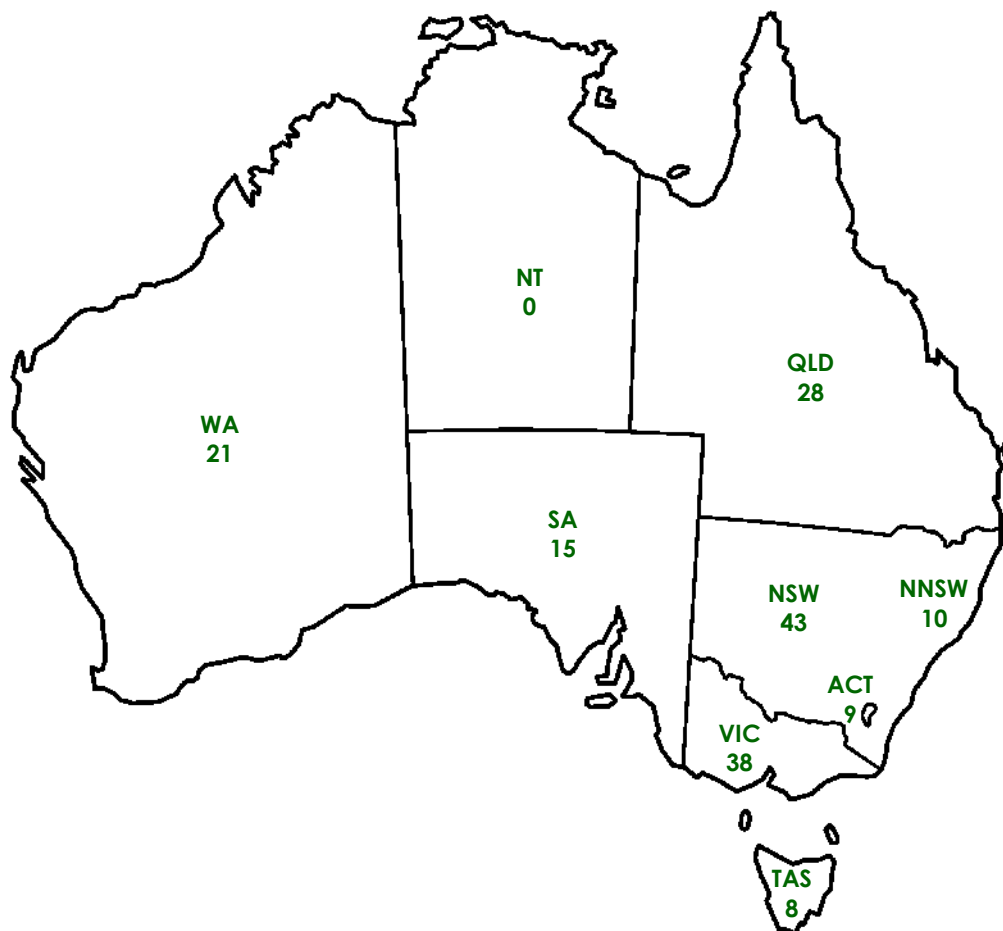


Figure 1 – NPL Clubs by State/Territory/Region

Table 1 - NPL Clubs across Australia

(excludes HAL and MF related academy teams)

ACT	NSW	NNSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Belconnen United Canberra FC Canberra Olympic Gungahlin United Monaro Panthers Riverina Rhinos Tigers FC Tuggeranong United Woden-Weston	Apia Leichhardt Balmain Tigers Bankstown City Bankstown United Blacktown City Blacktown Spartans Bonnyrigg White Eagles Camden Tigers Canterbury Bankstown Dulwich Hill Dunbar Rovers Fraser Park GHFA Spirit Gladesville Ravens Gladesville Ryde Granville Rage Hawkesbury City Hills United Illawarra Stingrays Inter Lions Macarthur Rams Maccabi Hakoah Manly United Marconi Stallions Mounties Wanderers Mt Druitt Town Rangers Nepean FC Northern Tigers NWS Koalas Parramatta FC Rockdale Rydalmere Lions SD Raiders St George FC St George City FA Stanmore Hawks Sutherland Sharks Sutherland Shire FA Sydney Olympic Sydney United Sydney University UNSW FC Wollongong Wolves	Adamstown Rosebud Broadmeadow Magic Charlestown City Blues Edgeworth Eagles Hamilton Olympic Lake Macquarie City Lambton Jaffas Maitland Magpies Valentine FC Weston Bears	Brisbane City Brisbane Strikers Cairns FC Capalaba Bulldogs Eastern Suburbs Gold Coast United Holland Park Hawks Ipswich Knights Lions FC Logan Lightning Magpies Crusaders Mitchelton Moreton Bay United Mudgeeraba SC North QLD United Olympic FC Peninsula Power Redlands United Rochedale Rovers Souths United Southside Eagles Sunshine Coast FC Sunshine Coast Wanderers SWQ Thunder The Gap FC Western Pride Wide Bay Buccaneers Wolves FC	Adelaide City Adelaide Comets Adelaide Olympic Adelaide University Campbelltown City Croydon Kings Cumberland United Fulham United MetroStars Para Hills Knights Salisbury Inter South Adelaide Sturt Lions West Adelaide West Torrens Birkalla	Clarence United Devonport Hobart Zebras Kingborough Lions Launceston City Northern Rangers Olympia FC Warriors South Hobart	Alamein FC Altona Magic Avondale FC Ballarat City Bayside United Bendigo City Bentleigh Greens Box Hill United Brunswick City Bulleen Lions Calder United Dandenong City Dandenong Thunder Eastern Lions Geelong Galaxy Utd Goulburn Valley Suns Green Gully Heidelberg United Hume City Kingston City Langwarrin SC Melbourne Knights Moreland City Moreland Zebras Murray United Nunawading City Northcote City North Geelong Warriors Oakleigh Cannons Pascoe Vale Port Melbourne Sharks South Melbourne Southern United Springvale Eagles St Albans Saints Sunshine George Cross Werribee City Whittlesea Ranges	Armadale Balcatta Bayswater City Cockburn City ECU Joondalup Ellenbrook United Floreath Athena Forrestfield United Fremantle City Inglewood United Joondalup United Joondalup City Mandurah City Murdoch University Perth SC Quinns Rockingham City Sorrento South West Phoenix Stirling Lions Subiaco

Later in this report there is discussion of the range and differences in the objectives of these clubs. In short, these clubs should not be viewed as a homogeneous group. The size and capability of these clubs is predicated upon a range of historical and current factors – capital city; size of metropolitan area; regional city or town; underpinning population in local catchment area etc.

Consequently, the clubs vary markedly in terms of a range of measures and factors, including numbers of teams, revenue and expenditure (including on players), sponsorship, facilities, membership, and community football involvement. As one indicator of the marked difference in the ‘size’ of NPL club operating budgets across the nation ranging from around \$150K to \$1.2million per season.

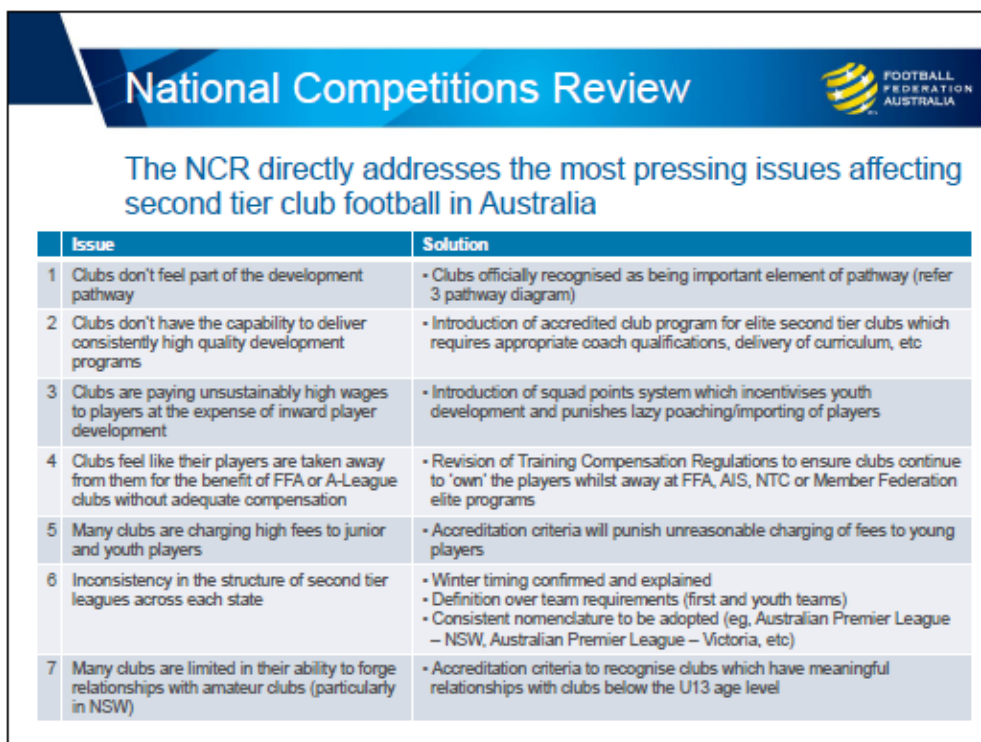
2.2 National Premier Leagues (NPL)

“The National Premier Leagues (NPL) is the national second tier competition in Australia which underpins the Hyundai A-League and Westfield W-League. The NPL operates in each Member Federation under a single national banner.”

(www.nationalpremierleagues.com.au)

2.2.1 The Intent

The FFA released the outcomes of the National Competitions Review (NCR) in May 2012. The key issues addressed in the NCR are outlined in Figure 2 below.



National Competitions Review

FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

The NCR directly addresses the most pressing issues affecting second tier club football in Australia

Issue	Solution
1 Clubs don't feel part of the development pathway	• Clubs officially recognised as being important element of pathway (refer 3 pathway diagram)
2 Clubs don't have the capability to deliver consistently high quality development programs	• Introduction of accredited club program for elite second tier clubs which requires appropriate coach qualifications, delivery of curriculum, etc
3 Clubs are paying unsustainably high wages to players at the expense of inward player development	• Introduction of squad points system which incentivises youth development and punishes lazy poaching/importing of players
4 Clubs feel like their players are taken away from them for the benefit of FFA or A-League clubs without adequate compensation	• Revision of Training Compensation Regulations to ensure clubs continue to 'own' the players whilst away at FFA, AIS, NTC or Member Federation elite programs
5 Many clubs are charging high fees to junior and youth players	• Accreditation criteria will punish unreasonable charging of fees to young players
6 Inconsistency in the structure of second tier leagues across each state	• Winter timing confirmed and explained • Definition over team requirements (first and youth teams) • Consistent nomenclature to be adopted (eg, Australian Premier League – NSW, Australian Premier League – Victoria, etc)
7 Many clubs are limited in their ability to forge relationships with amateur clubs (particularly in NSW)	• Accreditation criteria to recognise clubs which have meaningful relationships with clubs below the U13 age level

Figure 2 – Issues addressed in NCR (FFA, 2012)

The formation of the NPL was one of the key recommendations of the NCR, with the overarching objectives sought by the FFA being:

1. **To strengthen elite player development.**
2. **To ensure the sustainability of league competitions; and**
3. **To create value and connect more deeply with the Football Community;**

2.2.2 Outcomes for the NPL

More specifically, the FFA sought to achieve the key outcomes outlined in Figure 3 below:

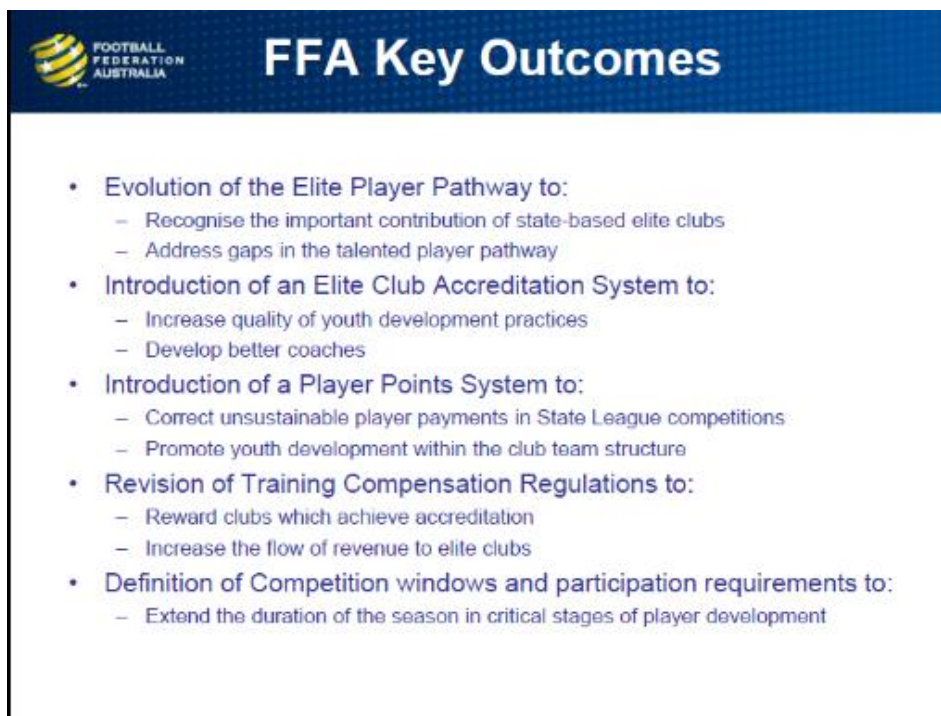


Figure 3 – Key Outcomes for the NPL (FFA, 2012)

Consequently, the inception of the NPL imposed an additional significant defined role for clubs to be part of the “elite pathway” in the development of footballers. This is illustrated in Figure 3 on the next page. This expanded role is defined in the ECL criteria which cover all aspects of club operations across ten (10) elements (and detailed at Appendix A):

1. Teams	6. Facilities
2. Youth Development	7. Organisational Structure
3. Coaching	8. Membership Protection
4. Governance	9. Medical
5. Finance	10. Reporting

3 About this Report

3.1 Background and Purpose of this Report

3.1.1 Background

Over the past 5 years it has become increasingly clear to many NPL clubs that the intent and objectives of the NPL arising from the outcomes of the NCR were, for the most part, not being reflected in the implementation within each MF region. Moreover, there were, and remain, concerns as to the long-term sustainability of the NPL model and the sustainability of many clubs in operating under such a regime.

These increasing concerns and frustrations were the core driver for the formation of the AAFC. While the mission of the AAFC is to represent the interests of clubs and take action on their behalf, this includes the provision by it of a measured, consultative and professional voice to find solutions that will help benefit football.

Accordingly, by this report, the AAFC seeks to provide a reference point for engagement with the key stakeholders in the NPL – Clubs, FFA and MFs – to work collaboratively to address the issues and concerns of clubs and to deliver holistically on all the objectives of the NPL.

3.1.2 Purpose

Firstly, this report is an opportunity to identify and acknowledge the elements of the NPL which have been a success. Elements, which should be retained and further developed.

Secondly, and without derogating from those successes, the consultations informing this report provide an opportunity to 'take stock' after the completion of the first 5 years of operation of the NPL. The inception of the NPL, and all its elements, has been a significant undertaking for the NPL clubs, FFA, MFs and their stakeholders, not least youth players and their parents. Experience suggests that in any corporate, sporting or social environment, that not all the objectives in implementation of a major new initiative will be fulfilled – and often not fulfilled in the initial period.

Accordingly, the approach has been to treat the challenges, issues and concerns identified in the implementation and operation of the NPL as lessons to be learned. In doing so, this report identifies and develops lessons and actions to support stakeholders to meet their objectives – in a sustainable manner over the longer term.

3.1.3 Sources for this Report

This report is a result of mostly qualitative research and consultations with our member NPL clubs over the past 12 months. This has included:

1. Outcomes of the first meeting of AAFC members on Melbourne on 21 March 2017;
2. AAFC Directors' Strategy meeting in Brisbane in July 2017;
3. Ongoing discussions with FIFA, AFC, FFA, MFs, HAL clubs, PFA;
4. Ongoing communications and consultations by the AAFC with member clubs culminating with a 'roadshow' of workshop-based meetings with NPL clubs in late February and early March 2018.

4 Findings – Successes

Outlined below are the successes identified by a consensus of NPL clubs. These are the aspects of the NPL and the environment within which it operates which are generally considered to have made a positive contribution to the objectives of the NPL.

4.1 Intent of the NCR outcomes

In general, NPL clubs support the intent and objectives of the NCR outcomes, which as mentioned earlier in this report, were to:

1. *Strengthen elite player development.*
2. *Ensure the sustainability of league competitions; and*
3. *Create value and connect more deeply with the Football Community;*

As will be discussed in more detail later in this report, the NPL clubs are largely driven by volunteers. Volunteers who love the game of football – otherwise, they would not volunteer. Accordingly, any genuine lover of the game of football wishes all our national teams to be able to compete and be more successful in international tournaments.

Moreover, the volunteers who drive the NPL clubs are prepared to make whatever reasonable contribution they can to the development of the game as a whole, while also developing and improving their own club and the community their club represents.

4.2 One National Brand – “NPL”

There was strong and consistent feedback from NPL clubs supporting the singular national brand – National Premier Leagues. Further, the NPL Finals Series provides a national link for the various state based NPL competitions.

This is a source of pride and an incentive in itself to reach what is, at this time, the highest level of football to which these clubs can aspire. It also provides an incentive for clubs to strive to improve youth development and to develop their facilities.



4.3 FFA Cup

Similarly, the FFA Cup is, for the most part, considered a very positive initiative for our game. Feedback from NPL clubs was that this competition:

- provides an opportunity to play different teams – either HAL clubs, but also clubs from local community football;
- potential for major match days (and sometimes a financial windfall at local grounds for clubs which reach the Round of 32 and beyond);
- overall, brings the football family together.



4.4 Youth Coaching Standards

In general, NPL clubs reported that there has been an overall improvement in the standard of youth coaching since the inception of the NPL. Notwithstanding discussion later in this report regarding several concerns with the coaching accreditation scheme, there is a consensus that the licencing of coaches, and focus on youth development has made a positive contribution.

5 Findings - Lessons to be Learned

This section of the report details the feedback from NPL clubs regarding the operation of the NPL which they believe has not been implemented as planned and/or is not as effective as it could be or should have been.

The lessons learned and identified focus upon areas for improvements for the future of the NPL and are expanded upon in this section of the report. It is noted this section will include commentary and discussion which relates directly to the 'Good Practices' discussed in the earlier section of this report.

In overall terms, the feedback from NPL clubs has identified a fundamental 'disconnect' between the clubs, which are the primary vehicle for the frontline operation of the NPL, the FFA which carries overall responsibility for the NPL and its MFs which have carriage of the NPL competitions in their respective jurisdictions. Put differently, over the past six (6) years of the NPL, there has developed a widening 'disconnect' between the 'public truth' of the NPL (e.g. as expressed at www.nationalpremierleagues.com.au and in the WOFP) and the 'ground truth' of the functioning of the state based NPL competitions.

This widening 'disconnect' can be categorised into five (5) areas of concern illustrated in Figure 5 below:



Figure 4 – Areas of Concern

Further details regarding these areas of concern are detailed in the ensuing section of this report.

5.1 Divergent objectives of NPL Clubs and FFA

The inception of the NPL in 2013 represented a fundamental shift in the role of community owned and volunteer operated football clubs in Australia. For more than 100 years prior to this time, clubs existed to meet the objectives of their members who, in turn, wanted the best for their clubs and the game. The NPL placed an additional significant and defined responsibility on clubs to be part of the “elite pathway” in the development of footballers.

By itself, this shift in the role and responsibility of NPL clubs is not the principal concern of the Clubs. The main concern identified in this report is the impact this shift has had on clubs and their stakeholders and the need to align the objectives of all groups.

The primary objectives of these two groups with respect to the NPL can be described as:

<p>FFA/ MFs</p>	<p>Arising from the NCR, the primary objective of the FFA in establishing the NPL was, and remains, the strengthening of elite player development. The FFA states that it seeks “...to incentivise clubs to develop players through their youth team structure as well as produce talent which progresses to national pathway programs and the Foxtel Y-League, Hyundai A-League, Westfield W-League and FFA National Teams” (www.nationalpremierleagues.com.au).</p> <p>This is illustrated in the original “Elite Pathway Model” shown at Figure 2 earlier in this report and is discussed further in this report. Beyond elite player development, the NCR outcomes were also to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ensure the sustainability of league competitions; and ➤ create value and connect more deeply with the Football Community.
<p>NPL Clubs</p>	<p>As mentioned earlier in this report, football clubs in Australia have been involved in either state/regional or national football competitions for well over a century. At its core, their prime objective has always been, and remains, to be sustainable over a longer term in competing to the best of their ability in these competitions.</p> <p>Beyond that core aim, NPL clubs have mostly all have been volunteer-driven, not-for-profit community/member owned organisations. Accordingly, they also have a range of complementary qualitative objectives which are driven by the particular interests of their members. These vary across the broad spectrum of the 172 NPL clubs and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a focus on senior teams. Prior to the commencement of the NPL many clubs only operated senior teams i.e. First Grade, Reserve Grade (often U23s), and a Youth Grade (often U18s or U19s); ➤ conversely several clubs are focussed on youth teams and youth development; ➤ focus on women’s/girls’ football, while there are many clubs which prior to the NPL (and continuing) have no focus on women’s/girls’ football; ➤ focus on being a focal point and a source of positive contribution to their local communities. A small selection of examples includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ British coal miners in the Newcastle/Hunter region over 100 years ago; ○ so-called ‘ethnic’ clubs formed by post WWII migrants to Australia; ○ university based clubs; ○ regional/district zones seeking to create a positive environment for local youth e.g. Western Pride FC based in the Ipswich area of Queensland.

Overall, the feedback from NPL clubs is a continuing heightened perception that the FFA and MFs have a singular focus on the “elite pathway” and a perception they do not adequately acknowledge and respect the long history, contribution and objectives of the NPL clubs. An increasingly held perception is that the NPL clubs exist principally to develop and produce players for HAL clubs and only to a lesser degree to further their own objectives and the wishes of their members.

A particular example cited by many NPL clubs as an illustration of this perception concerns the shift from the traditional Reserve Grade/U23s to U20s teams. From the perspective of the “elite pathway”, the principle seems to be that if a player has not been identified and selected into a HAL youth or senior team, or national team, by the age of 20, then he is not likely to ever be selected.

From a club perspective, however, this player might still be considered by the club as a valuable player and a future club First Grade team. Moreover, these young men are also potential future club volunteers and administrators. Discarding many of them at such a young age operates against the development of a club ethos – a commitment to the club over the longer term and the embedding of the club into its community and the football landscape.

Another key issue is the short-term nature of NPL and SAP licences as an illustration of the divergence in objectives of the FFA/MFs and NPL clubs. Clubs are involved in football for the long-term. Indeed, quite a number have been in existence for over 100 years and certainly a large number have existed for over 50 years. While many clubs have experienced relegation, their right to operate has continued, albeit in a lower division. Moreover, the short-term nature of NPL licences does not support longer-term planning and resourcing for facilities development.

These issues, coupled with the other concerns detailed in this report, have a serious and direct impact upon clubs. Poignantly, it has a direct and unfavourable impact upon the thousands of volunteers across the 172 NPL clubs nationally.

Volunteering Australia (formerly known as the Australian Council for Volunteering) defines volunteering, inter alia, as “...time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain... as contributing to community wellbeing”. While there are increasing numbers of full-time and part-time paid personnel at clubs (mostly coaches, technical directors, and players), the core drivers of clubs are volunteers. Without them, clubs simply would not exist. By the above definition, their objectives are primarily localised and qualitative. While club volunteers might be proud when one of their players moves to a higher level, it is not the core driver for the vast majority of volunteers. What drives them is the success of their club and their love for and connection with it and its role in the football and wider community.

Feedback from clubs does not overwhelmingly suggest that they consider the FFA’s objectives to be ‘wrong’, per se. Indeed, as has already been mentioned in this report, like any genuine football supporter, they wish all our national teams to be able to compete and be more successful in international tournaments.

The issue which is of increasing concern is that urgent attention is needed to align this objective with the objectives of the volunteers and their clubs - objectives which are not believed to be mutually exclusive.

5.2 Lack of consultation and representation of clubs

Compounding the issues raised in the previous point, there was strong and consistent feedback from NPL clubs regarding their experiences over the past 6 years in seeking to be properly represented in the development and implementation of the ECL criteria and the direction of the NPL in their respective regions.

The consistent and overwhelming feedback has identified:

- a lack of consultation, and in many instances, no consultation on changes;
- club contributions to any consultative processes have had limited influence on decisions by MFs;
- even in MF regions which have NPL Standing Committees, these bodies are merely consultative and advisory groups. They have no decision-making authority;
- a perception that the fact NPL Clubs are not voting members in their respective MF (except Tasmania) is a key factor in MFs not sufficiently considering their concerns;
- short-term NPL and SAP licence periods (typically 3 to 5 years) place a limitation on the confidence of NPL clubs in raising issues and concerns with MFs. The strong perception is that if they appear to be too critical their licence may not be renewed;

5.3 Contributing to the “Elite Pathway”

As previously mentioned in this report, the core objective behind the establishment of the NPL was to enhance the development of player talent for HAL and WPL clubs and national teams. As identified above, there is consensus among the NPL clubs that they are more than willing to make their contribution to this enhanced player development. However, there is also consensus that the implementation of the NPL by MFs over the past 6 years has in some respects diluted the effectiveness of the role of NPL clubs in the elite pathway.

There are a range of factors which clubs have expressed, including:

<p>Number of NPL clubs</p>	<p>There are too many NPL clubs, in particular in MF regions which have created multiple NPL ‘divisions’. The impact of this is three-fold and inter-related:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the pool of youth talent and consequently, their development as elite players is diluted. (We understand this is a particular finding arising from the recent review of the NPL by the FFV); b. a number of NPL clubs especially in lower NPL divisions and in the smaller population centres do not have a history of involvement in youth development; c. parents of players who, in reality, should not be part of an ‘elite’ program are, however, paying the high fees to participate. <p>In addition, member feedback from regional areas was that even further dilution of talented players (boys) occurred by having teams in every age group. The view is that in smaller population centres there is insufficient talent to be classed as “elite”.</p>
<p>HAL club academies</p>	<p>As illustrated in Appendix A – Elite Pathway Model (2012), earlier in this report, the HAL academies were limited to U17-18 age groups. Since 2013, however, HAL academies now reach down to the U12 age groups.</p> <p>The ability for HAL academies to select from NPL clubs the so-called ‘best of the best’ at such a young age:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. even further dilutes the ‘elite’ level of NPL club youth development, especially away from the major metropolitan centres; b. is a marked disincentive to NPL clubs to contribute to the “Elite Pathway”, including severely limiting opportunities for NPL clubs to earn revenue by way of training compensation (refer next point).

<p>Training compensation</p>	<p>One of the key outcomes sought by the NCR in establishing the NPL was a revision of training compensation regulations (refer Figure 1 – FFA Key Outcomes) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “reward clubs - increase the flow of revenue to elite clubs” <p>In fact, the NCR went so far as to state “adjusting the training compensation regime is fundamental to increasing elite club revenues and to incentivise accreditation”.</p> <p>There is overwhelming feedback from clubs that the NCR outcomes are far from being realised. Clubs were highly critical of the training compensation system, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. lack of clarity on the functioning of the system; b. lack of active support from FFA and/or MFs; c. significant delay in payment of compensation.
<p>Coaching accreditation and development</p>	<p>Mentioned in the previous section of this report, is positive feedback from clubs that, overall, the quality of coaching at youth levels has improved over the past 6 years.</p> <p>Without limiting this positive feedback, there remain a number of concerns expressed by clubs, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a lack of any seemingly real progress in the long-standing issue of the high cost of accredited training programs; b. seemingly no consideration of development of learning methods which reduce face-to-face training time. c. as a consequence of (a) and (b) above, there is a significant increase in fees paid to coaches which are then passed onto parents of youth players; d. a lack of continuing education for coaches to further develop genuine competency.

Training Compensation

Adjusting the Training Compensation regime is fundamental to increasing elite club revenues and to incentivise accreditation

The principles in amending the current system are as follows:

- The key objective is to appropriately allocate funds received for Training Compensation.
- FFA should continue to allocate funds in a way that provides greater assistance to football development than is provided for in the FIFA Regulations.
- There should be different levels of eligibility for clubs to receive funds, reflecting the quality of training a club has provided to a talented young player.
- It is important that clubs are rewarded for investing in professional training environments.
- APL Club Accreditation will be used to determine the level of a club's eligibility.
- It is not appropriate that state/national bodies such as the AIS receive funds for Training Compensation
- Rather, the junior club from which the player has come should continue to be recognised for Training Compensation purposes during the time he is at an Institute, NTC etc
- This should incentivise clubs to facilitate the movement of their players into NTCs, SAPs, etc

Accredited APL clubs will receive a greater share of training compensation.

Figure 5 – Training Compensation regime principles (FFA, 2012)

5.4 Consistent inconsistency in application of ECL Criteria

*“To be eligible to participate in the NPL within each Member Federation, and in addition to sporting merit, clubs must meet uniform national criteria.
(www.nationalpremierleagues.com.au)*

In short, the reality is that the national criteria (ECL) is far from “uniform”. To illustrate this lack of uniformity details of ECL criteria for each MF operated NPL competition is in this report at:

- Table 2 - schedule of the composition of team structures for men’s, women’s, boys’ and girls’ teams;
- Appendix B – criteria for other ECL criteria.









The differences in ECL criteria in each MF region have in part resulted from a recognition by the FFA arising out of the NCR that “...due to the differing characteristics of each state league the ECL criteria have been developed in a way that enables MFs to adjust certain criteria to fit local conditions or characteristics. However, FFA has also recognised certain criteria which are considered fundamental and shall be applied in a nationally consistent manner”.

To the extent the differences reflect the “differing characteristics” referred to above, there is general support from NPL clubs as being supportive of the sustainability of clubs (an issue addressed in further detail in the next section of this report). An example is the fact that in South Australia there is a Reserve Grade rather than U20s. Clubs.

However, an analysis of the ECL criteria across each MF region reveals a number of differences which are more “fundamental”, and it is less apparent as to why they have not been applied in a more consistent manner. To illustrate, this report highlights just two examples:

1. **Youth and SAP Teams** – there are no NPL club youth teams in Tasmania and South Australia; and
2. **PPS** – there are markedly differing levels of points and the definitions of the components of the PPS system ranging from 170 points to 200 points.

Table 2 - NPL Competition Structures

								
Mens	1 Division 9 teams First Grade U20 U18	3 Divisions NPL1-12 Teams NPL2-14 Teams NPL3- 14 Teams First Grade U20 U18	1 Division 11 teams First Grade U20 U18	2 Divisions NPL-14 Teams QPL-13 Teams First Grade U20 U18	1 Division 12 teams First Grade Reserves U18	1 Division 8 teams First Grade	3 Divisions NPL1-14 Teams NPL2 East -10 Teams NPL2 West- 10 Teams First Grade U20 U18	1 Division 14 teams First Grade U20 U18
Womens	1 Division 8 teams First Grade Reserves	2 Divisions NPL1-12 Teams NPL2-12 Teams First Grade Reserves	-	1 Division 14 teams First Grade	1 Division 8 teams First Grade Reserves	-	1 Division 10 Teams First Grade U19	-
Boys	1 Division 9 teams U16 U14 U13	2 Divisions NPL1-26 Teams NPL2-18 Teams U16 U15 U14 U13	1 Division 13 teams U16 U15 U14 U13	2 Divisions NPL-11 teams QPL-13 teams U16 U15 U14 U13	All NPL clubs operate youth teams in the Junior Premier League (JPL) which also includes youth teams from some State League clubs	-	2 Divisions NPL East-18 Teams NPL West-17 Teams U16 U15 U14 U13	1 Division (3 conferences) 22 teams U16 U15 U14 U13
Girls	1 Division 8 teams U17 U15 U13	2 Divisions NPL1-12 Teams NPL2-12 Teams U17 U15 U14	-	1 Division 13 teams U17 U15 U13	-	-	1 Divisions 10 Teams U16 U14	-
Club SAP	Not mandatory U9-U12	Not mandatory U9-U12	Not mandatory U9 (2018) U9-U12 (by 2021)	Not mandatory U9-U12	-	-	Not mandatory U9-U12	Not mandatory U9-U12

5.5 Financial and Resource Burden on Clubs and Parents

As mentioned earlier in this report, after well over 100 years of club participation in football competitions across Australia, the inception of the NPL placed an additional significant and defined role for clubs to be part of the “elite pathway” in the development of footballers.

The ECL criteria are comprehensive and cover all aspects of club operations across ten (10) elements and detailed at Appendix A. Further, beyond the detailed ECL criteria issued by each MF, there are extensive additional requirements set by FFA for clubs to host FFA Cup matches.

Clubs expressed an understanding and, indeed, support of the intent of the ECL criteria. An intent to raise overall standards of club management to support enhanced player development and the standard of football in Australia.

However, this added role (expressed in the detailed ECL criteria) has imposed on them a significant burden in terms of increased volunteer time and costs for clubs. This burden has been largely transferred to parents of youth players as they have been the major source of revenue to recoup these costs.

Certainly amongst the many smaller NPL clubs, and especially those outside the major metropolitan areas, clubs have been expressing a concern for their sustainability since the outcomes of the NCR were presented in 2012.

An example which seems to express the position of the majority of NPL clubs across Australia is a letter from Northern New South Wales Football to FFA in August 2012. After first expressing support for the intent of the NCR outcomes, tellingly, the letter also states:

“...NNSWF and our Premier Clubs are of the view that many of the [NCR] recommendations...will have a detrimental impact upon clubs and unnecessarily burden volunteers who are already struggling to meet ever increasing demands”

“The Board and clubs are justifiably concerned about the financial impost that many of the recommendations will place on clubs”

“the Elite Club Criteria as prescribed is in NNSWF’s view financially unsustainable in the Hunter Region and will potentially result in the demise of clubs...”

While this letter was in respect of that particular region, the consistent feedback from NPL clubs has been that the current model cannot be sustained where no money filters down from top of the pyramid to non-professional competitions, as all the cost pressures are on grassroots, parents & volunteers to maintain the community and NPL competitions.

Put in more direct terms there is an increasing view expressed by many club administrators and coaches that football has become a “rich man’s sport”.

The burdens described below and the concerns about the negative effects on NPL Clubs identified above are attributable to the restrictions imposed on Clubs which are identified and defined as NPL Clubs. The Clubs can deliver the ‘NPL program’, which will include all its objectives, without necessarily being prohibited from fulfilling their other functions and the aims of their members.

Being permitted to do so, provided it does not inhibit their ability to deliver the NPL Program, will assist the clubs to remain financially viable, responsive to the needs of their members and supporters and build and maintain better ties to their communities. Lifting the restriction upon clubs fielding non-NPL teams, for example, will enable them to amortise costs, become more financially viable, better able to deliver the game to elite players affordably, retain volunteers, secure necessary facilities.

5.5.1 Cost and Volunteer Pressures

A selection of the cost and volunteer pressures referred to earlier, while varying somewhat across MF regions, includes:

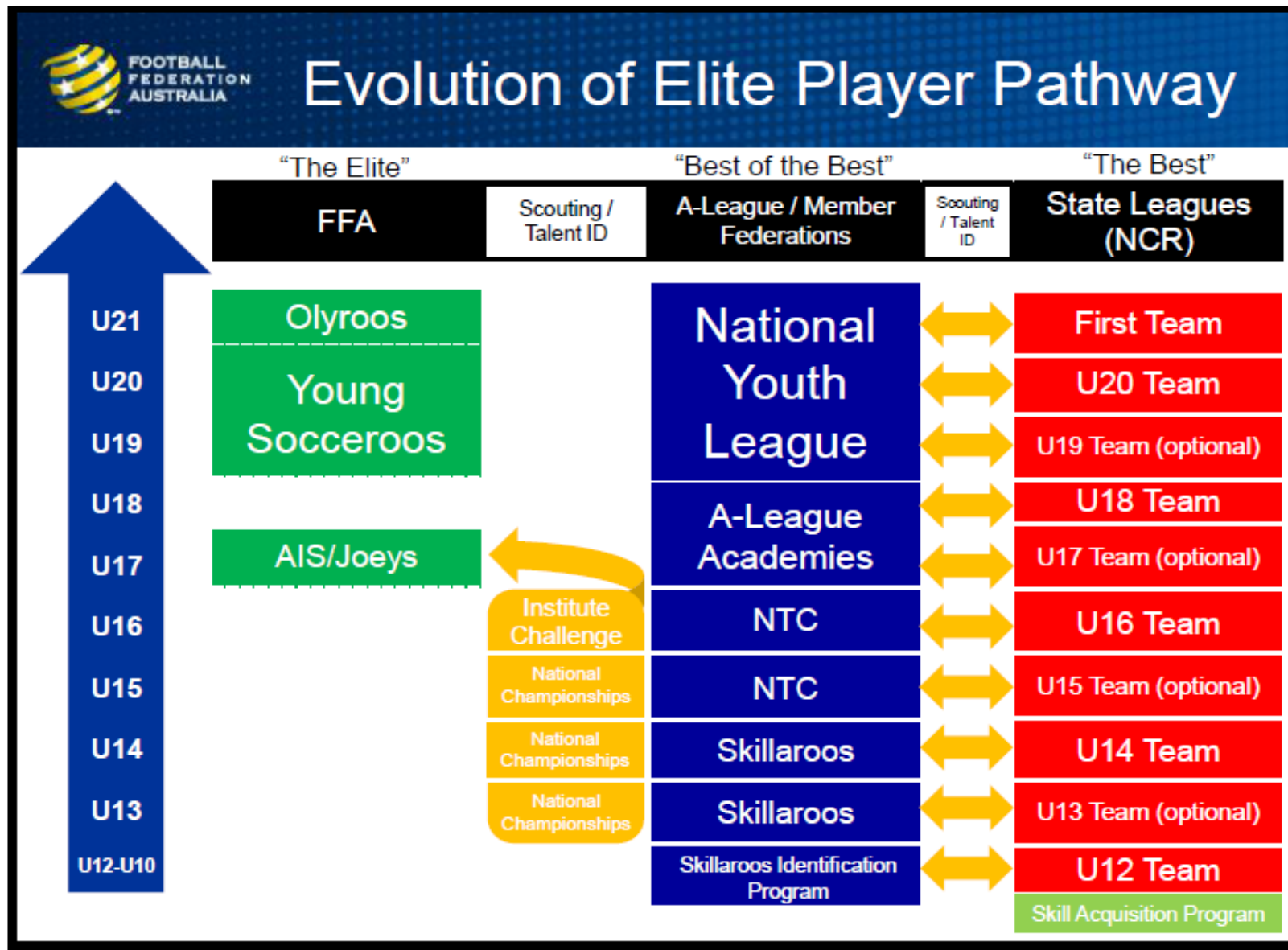
- a. increased **player payments**. Contrary to the stated objective of the PPS, player payments have increased across MF regions;
- b. **licence and registration fees** charged by MFs;
- c. registration charges for **team officials**;
- d. costs and time for accredited **coaching courses** with a consequent increase in **coaches fees**;
- e. fees for **Technical Directors**, especially in MF regions where the requirement is for these to be full-time positions;
- f. **NPL facility and match day** requirements;
- g. extensive **FFA Cup match day** requirements;
- h. heightened **reporting and governance** requirements;

5.5.2 Revenue Restrictions and Pressures

There are also a number of revenue related pressures and, moreover, restrictions. Again, some of these vary in differing states, but a selection includes:

- a. **NPL competition sponsorship** rights being held by the FFA with MFs not permitted to gain NPL competition sponsors in the absence of any national sponsor;
- b. consequent restrictions on **club sponsorship** revenue, including:
 - i. exclusion on club sponsors which are competitors to FFA and/or MF sponsors;
 - ii. primacy of NPL banners at grounds without any revenue sharing;
 - iii. restrictions on shirt sponsorship e.g. one MF where they retain right to place their sponsor on club shirts;
- c. lack of co-ordinated national approach to **marketing of the NPL**, including any revenue from live streaming;
- d. limited **competition prizemoney**;
- e. where relevant, restrictions on the **number of youth teams** clubs may operate. This places a limitation on the number of players over which the abovementioned costs can be amortised.

APPENDIX A – ELITE PATHWAY (FFA, 2012)



APPENDIX B – NPL ECL CRITERIA

Criteria	QLD 2020	NNSW 2017-2019	NSW	ACT 2017-2020	VIC 2017-2019	TAS 2016-2018	SA	WA 2017-2020
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT								
Youth Development Plan	Mandatory approved by State TD	Mandatory approved by State TD	Mandatory approved by State TD	Mandatory	Mandatory approved by State TD		Mandatory, assisted by State TD	Mandatory
Club Service & Support	May require 1 player per year for Football Qld Foundation			Formal affiliation agreement with neighbouring amateur club(s)			Encouraged to establish Community Club Academy Partnership with local schools Partnership with regional assoc.	Formal affiliation agreement with neighbouring amateur club(s)
Regional/ Association Affiliation	Where applicable, documented formal Regional Affiliation Agreement in place		Where applicable, documented formal Regional Affiliation Agreement in place	Where applicable, documented formal Regional Affiliation Agreement in place	Where applicable, documented formal Regional Affiliation Agreement in place			Where applicable, documented formal Regional Affiliation Agreement in place
Liaison with Member Federation Technical Director	Club TD prepares reports and meets with State TD meet and share information and ideas on a regular basis.	Club TD implements agreed Plan which has been endorsed by the State TD and maintains records for audit. NNSWF TD will provide coaching support	Club TD prepares reports and meets with State TD meet and share information and ideas on a regular basis.	Club TD prepares reports and meets with State TD meet and share information and ideas on a regular basis.	Club TD prepares reports and meets with State TD meet and share information and ideas on a regular basis.			Club TD prepares reports and meets with State TD meet and share information and ideas on a regular basis.
Training Program Duration	Training program for U13 to U20 teams - 40 weeks	For 13s, 14s, 15s & 16s - min 9 mths.	Training program for U13 to U20 teams - 40 weeks, unless otherwise approved by FFA.	Training program for U13 to U20 teams - 40 weeks, unless otherwise approved by FFA.	Training program for U13 to U20 teams - 40 weeks, unless otherwise approved by FFA.			Training program for U13 to U20 teams - 40 weeks, unless otherwise approved by FFA.
COACHING								
Technical Director	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.	B-Licence	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.	C-Licence	B-Licence	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.
First Team Coach	A-Licence or Old A-Licence AND refresher cert.	B-Licence	A-Licence or Old A-Licence AND refresher cert.	A-Licence or Old A-Licence AND refresher cert.	A-Licence or Old A-Licence AND refresher cert.	C-Licence	B-Licence	A-Licence or Old A-Licence AND refresher cert.
U20 Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	Senior C-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	C-Licence	Reserves C-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.
U18 Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	Senior C-Licence	B-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	B-Licence	Senior Licence	C-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.
U16 Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	Youth C-Licence (Senior C-Licence encouraged)	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	Youth Licence	C-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)
U15 Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	Youth C-Licence (Senior C-Licence encouraged)	C-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	C-Licence	Youth Licence	C-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)
U14 Coach	Youth C-Licence then Youth B (when available)	Youth C-Licence (Senior C-Licence encouraged)	Youth C-Licence then Youth B (when available)	Youth C-Licence then Youth B (when available)	Youth C-Licence then Youth B (when available)	Youth Licence	C-Licence	Youth C-Licence then Youth B (when available)

Criteria	QLD 2020	NNSW 2017-2019	NSW	ACT 2017-2020	VIC 2017-2019	TAS 2016-2018	SA	WA 2017-2020
U13 Coach	Youth C-License then Youth B (when available)	Youth C-License (Senior C-License encouraged)	Youth C-License	Youth C-License then Youth B (when available)	Youth C-License	Youth Licence	C-License	Youth C-License then Youth B (when available)
U12 Coach			Youth C-License		Youth C-License	Junior Licence	Skill Training Certificate	
SAP			Youth C-License	Youth C-License	Youth C-License	Junior Licence	Miniroos Skill Training Certificate	Youth C-License
First Team Assistant Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	Attend Senior C-Licence and hold Senior Coaching Cert.	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	A-Licence or Old A AND refresher cert.		C-License	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.
U20 Assistant Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	Attend Senior C-Licence and hold Senior Coaching Cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.		Reserves C-License	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.
U18 Assistant Coach	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	Attend Senior C-Licence and hold Senior Coaching Cert.	C-Licence and commenced B-Licence	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)	C-Licence and commenced B-Licence		C-License	B-Licence or Old B AND refresher cert. or Youth B (when available)
U16 Assistant Coach	Youth C-License (Senior C-License recommended)	Attend Youth C-Licence and hold Game Training Cert.	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.	Youth C-License (Senior C-License recommended)	B-Licence or Old B AND a refresher cert.		C-License	Youth C-License (Senior C-License recommended)
U15 Assistant Coach	Youth C-License (Senior C-License recommended)	Attend Youth C-Licence and hold Game Training Cert.	Youth C-License	Youth C-License (Senior C-License recommended)	Youth C-License		C-License	Youth C-License (Senior C-License recommended)
U14 Assistant Coach	Youth C-License	Attend Youth C-Licence and hold Game Training Cert.	Youth C-License then Youth B (when available)	Youth C-License	Youth C-License then Youth B (when available)		C-License	Youth C-License
U13 Assistant Coach	Youth C-License	Attend Youth C-Licence and hold Game Training Cert.	Youth C-License	Youth C-License	Youth C-License		C-License	Youth C-License
U12 Assistant Coach	Youth C-License		Youth C-License		Youth C-License			
First Team GK Coach U20 GK Coach U18 GK Coach	FFA Level 2	Community Goalkeeping Course	FFA Level 2	FFA Level 2	FFA Level 2			FFA Level 2
U16 GK Coach U15 GK Coach U14 GK Coach U13 GK Coach	FFA Level 1	Community Goalkeeping Course	FFA Level 1	FFA Level 1	FFA Level 1			FFA Level 1

Criteria	QLD 2020	NNSW 2017-2019	NSW	ACT 2017-2020	VIC 2017-2019	TAS 2016-2018	SA	WA 2017-2020
GOVERNANCE								
Membership	All key stakeholders are recognised as Members under Constitution	All key stakeholders are recognised as Members under Constitution	All key stakeholders are recognised as Members under Constitution	Not mandatory. All key stakeholders recognised as Members under Constitution	All key stakeholders are recognised as Members under Constitution			Not mandatory. All key stakeholders recognised as Members under Constitution
Business Plan	Develop basic annual Business Plan	Club develops detailed annual Business Plan and 3-year plan.	Develop basic annual Business Plan	Not mandatory. Develop detailed 3-year business plan.	Develop basic annual Business Plan		Prepare Business Plan and longer term Strategic Plan	Not mandatory. Develop detailed 3-year business plan.
Public Forums	Clubs hosts one Members /Public Forum per annum.	Clubs hosts a Members /Public Forum on two occasions per annum.		Clubs hosts a Members /Public Forum on two occasions per annum.				Clubs hosts a Members /Public Forum on two occasions per annum.
Player Agents	Annual Statutory Declaration re any relationship with Player Agent.	Annual Statutory Declaration re any relationship with Player Agent.	Annual Statutory Declaration re any relationship with Player Agent.	Annual Statutory Declaration re any relationship with Player Agent.	Annual Statutory Declaration re any relationship with Player Agent.			Annual Statutory Declaration re any relationship with Player Agent.
Private Academies / Overseas Clubs	Annual Statutory Declaration confirming no relationship with Private Academy.	Annual Statutory Declaration confirming no relationship with Private Academy.	Annual Statutory Declaration confirming no relationship with Private Academy.	Annual Statutory Declaration confirming no relationship with Private Academy.	Annual Statutory Declaration confirming no relationship with Private Academy.			Annual Statutory Declaration confirming no relationship with Private Academy.
National Registration Regulations	Mandatory compliance	Mandatory compliance	Mandatory compliance	Mandatory compliance	Mandatory compliance		Mandatory compliance	Mandatory compliance
Annual General Meeting	Must hold AGM at which all Members shall attend and be entitled to speak.	Must hold AGM at which all Members shall attend and be entitled to speak.	Must hold AGM at which all Members shall attend and be entitled to speak.	Must hold AGM at which all Members shall attend and be entitled to participate.	Must hold AGM at which all Members shall attend and be entitled to speak.		Must hold AGM	Must hold AGM at which all Members shall attend and be entitled to participate.
Board Diversity	Recommended at least 40% female representation on Board							
FINANCE								
Financial Records	as required under Australian law.	as required under Australian law.	as required under Australian law.	as required under Australian law.	as required under Australian law.	as required under Australian law.		as required under Australian law.
Annual Financial Statements	in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards	in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards. Audited	in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards	in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards	in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards	in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards		in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
Inspection of Financial Records	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested within 3 days of receiving notice of an inspection.	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested within 7 days of receiving notice of an inspection.	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested within 10 days of receiving notice of an inspection.	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested	Make available to MF or FFA any financial information requested within 3 days of receiving notice of an inspection.	Must make available to the Member Federation or FFA any financial information requested within 10 days of receiving notice of an inspection.
Accounting Systems	Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.	Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.	Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.	Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.	Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.	Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.		Must maintain accounting systems to enable it to properly maintain its financial records.

Criteria	QLD 2020	NNSW 2017-2019	NSW	ACT 2017-2020	VIC 2017-2019	TAS 2016-2018	SA	WA 2017-2020
Training Compensation	Entitled to training compensation in accordance with FIFA regulations and FFA's National Registration Regulations.	Clubs will be entitled to solidarity contribution in accordance with FIFA regulations	Entitled to training compensation in accordance with FIFA regulations and FFA's National Registration Regulations.	Entitled to training compensation in accordance with FIFA regulations and FFA's National Registration Regulations.	Entitled to training compensation in accordance with FIFA regulations and FFA's National Registration Regulations.			Entitled to training compensation in accordance with FIFA regulations and FFA's National Registration Regulations.
Fee Capping			MF may prescribe a minimum/ maximum registration fee.	MF may prescribe a minimum/ maximum registration fee.	MF may prescribe a minimum/ maximum registration fee.			MF may prescribe a minimum/ maximum registration fee.
Transparency of Fees	Club must advise estimated costs, by type, for each age group / team and profit. Must be reported for approval on an annual basis	Club must advise estimated costs, by type, for each age group / team and profit. Must be reported for approval on an annual basis	Club must advise estimated costs, by type, incurred for each age group / team and profit. Reported to MF who can reset	Club must advise estimated costs, by type, for each age group / team and profit. Must be reported for approval on an annual basis	Club must advise estimated costs, by type, incurred for each age group / team and profit. Reported to MF who can reset			Club must advise estimated costs, by type, for each age group / team and profit. Must be reported for approval on an annual basis
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE								
Organisational Structure	Document management structure and submit to MF before each season.	Document management structure and submit to MF before each season.	Document management structure and submit to MF before each season.	Document management structure and submit to MF before each season.	Document management structure and submit to MF before each season.		Implement Club Liaison Officer positions. Mandatory Club Administrator paid for 15hrs/week	Document management structure and submit to MF before each season.
Club Roles	Document key positions	Document key positions	Documentation of key positions	Recommend documentation of key positions	Documentation of key positions			Recommend documentation of key positions
NPL Womens			Ensure compliance with governance		Ensure compliance with governance			
MEMBERSHIP PROTECTION								
FFA Member Protection Policy	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply
Child Protection	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply	Comply
REPORTING								
Club Annual Report	Prepare annual report and be submitted as prescribed by MF		Annual Traffic Light Report	Not mandatory. Prepare annual report and be submitted as prescribed by MF	Annual Traffic Light Report		Prepare annual report and submit to FFSA	Not mandatory. Prepare annual report and be submitted as prescribed by MF
Financial Report	Submit annual audited financial statements within 4 months of the end of financial year.	Submit annual audited financial statements within 3 months of the end of financial year.	Submit annual audited financial statements	Submit annual audited financial statements within 4 months of the end of financial year.	Submit annual audited financial statements	Submit annual audited financial statements within 4 months of the end of financial year.		Submit annual audited financial statements within 4 months of the end of financial year.
Fee Report	Club shall submit a report on an annual basis outlining its proposed player fees for the year.	Club shall submit a report on an annual basis outlining its proposed player fees for the year.	Club shall submit a report on an annual basis outlining its proposed player fees for the year.	Club shall submit a report on an annual basis outlining its proposed player fees for the year.	Club shall submit a report on an annual basis outlining its proposed player fees for the year.			Club shall submit a report on an annual basis outlining its proposed player fees for the year.
Player Points System (PPS)	Submit PPS report pre-season and as required by MF outlining composition of First team squad			Submit PPS report pre-season and as required by MF outlining composition of First team squad				Submit PPS report pre-season and as required by MF outlining composition of First team squad

Criteria	QLD 2020	NNSW 2017-2019	NSW	ACT 2017-2020	VIC 2017-2019	TAS 2016-2018	SA	WA 2017-2020
FACILITIES								
Minimum Facility Standards	Comply with min. venue standards as prescribed by MF.	Comply with min. facility standards as prescribed by MF.	Comply with min. facility standards for the appropriate level of competition	Comply with min. facility standards as prescribed by MF.	Comply with min. facility standards for the appropriate level of competition	Comply with min. facility standards as prescribed by MF.		Comply with min. facility standards as prescribed by MF.
Member Federation Facility Strategy	Must act in accordance with the MFs overall facility strategy.	Must have regard for the MFs overall facility strategy.	Must act in accordance with the MFs overall facility strategy.	Must act in accordance with the MFs overall facility strategy.	Must act in accordance with the MFs overall facility strategy.			Must act in accordance with the MFs overall facility strategy.
Local Government	Not mandatory. Must obtain written confirmation from the LGA on an annual basis endorsing their Facilities Plan.	Not mandatory. Must obtain written confirmation from the LGA on an annual basis endorsing their Facilities Plan.	Not mandatory. Must obtain written confirmation from the LGA on an annual basis endorsing their use of facility	Not mandatory. Must obtain written confirmation from the LGA on an annual basis endorsing their Facilities Plan.	Not mandatory. Must obtain written confirmation from the LGA on an annual basis endorsing their use of facility			Not mandatory. Must obtain written confirmation from the LGA on an annual basis endorsing their Facilities Plan.
MEDICAL								
Match Day Coverage	L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)	Physiotherapist (First, 20s, 18s) Doctor on-call (all games) Level 2 Sports Trainer (16s - 13s)	Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)	Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)	Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)		L2 Sports Trainer or physiotherapist (Senior Teams) Senior First Aid Officer (Junior and Miniroos teams)	Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)
Training Coverage	L2 (First Team) L2 on-call (U20,U18) L1 on-call (U16 -U13)		Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)	Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)	Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)			Physio (First Team) Doctor on-call (1st) L 2 Sports Trainer (U20, U18) L 1 Sports Trainer (U16 - U13)
Supplies (Match Day & Training)	First aid/strapping (all teams) Stretcher (match day)	First aid/strapping (all teams) Stretcher (match day)	First aid kit/strapping(all teams) Stretcher (match day)	First aid kit/strapping(all teams) Stretcher (match day)	First aid kit/strapping(all teams) Stretcher (match day)		First aid kit/strapping(all teams) Stretcher (match day)	First aid kit/strapping(all teams) Stretcher (match day)
Defibrillator	FQ will determine requirements		Available at all training and match day venues.	Available at all training and match day venues.	Available at all training and match day venues.			Available at all training and match day venues.
Facilities	Treatment facility/room at training/matches (First, 20s, 18s) Treatment table under cover at training and matches (U16 - U13)	Treatment facility/room at training/matches (First, 20s, 18s) Treatment table under cover at training and matches (U16 - U13)	Treatment facility/room at training/matches (First, 20s, 18s) Treatment table under cover at training and matches (U16 - U13)	Treatment facility/room at training/matches (First, 20s, 18s) Treatment table under cover at training and matches (U16 - U13)	Treatment facility/room at training/matches (First, 20s, 18s) Treatment table under cover at training and matches (U16 - U13)			Treatment facility/room at training/matches (First, 20s, 18s) Treatment table under cover at training and matches (U16 - U13)
Minimum Medical Standards	Comply with applicable min. medical standards as prescribed		Comply with applicable min. medical standards as prescribed	Comply with applicable min. medical standards as prescribed	Comply with applicable min. medical standards as prescribed			Comply with applicable min. medical standards as prescribed
Strategy	Must appoint a Head of Medical who will liaise with MF CMO to develop best practice medical standards		Not mandatory. Must appoint a Head of Medical who will liaise with MF CMO to develop best practice medical standards	Not mandatory. Must appoint a Head of Medical who will liaise with MF CMO to develop best practice medical standards	Not mandatory. Must appoint a Head of Medical who will liaise with MF CMO to develop best practice medical standards			Not mandatory. Must appoint a Head of Medical who will liaise with MF CMO to develop best practice medical standards