



FOOTBALL  
AUSTRALIA

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2024





Football Australia recognises, respects and celebrates the cultural distinctions of First Nations Australians and values their rich and positive contribution not only to football, but also to the broader Australian and global societies. In the spirit of reconciliation, Football Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of Australia and that this sovereignty was never ceded. We extend this respect and honour to acknowledge all Elders past and present, and to their future generations as we continue to grow with their guidance and wisdom.

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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**Transformation drives our purpose as we focus on building Football Australia's capability, capacity and capital to better serve, support and ultimately unlock the extraordinary potential that lies within our national game.**

The 2024 financial year marked a period of strategic renewal for Football Australia. We focused on reimagining our operational structures while planting the seeds for future growth through targeted foundational investments. During this pivotal year, our national teams continued to inspire millions, our commercial partnerships grew, and our grassroots community demonstrated unwavering commitment to the game we all love. Despite facing challenges across various fronts, we remained steadfast in our dedication to football's long-term prosperity, making deliberate choices that we hope will position Australian football to thrive for generations to come.

## On-Field

Our National Teams continued to inspire the nation and showcase Australian football on the global stage. The Subway Socceroos' campaign to qualify directly for the FIFA World Cup 26™ continued, even with the significant coaching change as former Socceroo Tony Popovic replaced Graham Arnold to lead our men's National Team.

We also bade farewell to Tony Gustavsson as CommBank Matildas coach and welcomed back our trusted former Matildas coach, Tom Sermanni, to guide the team on an interim basis. The organisation embarked on an extensive search for a new National Head Coach for the Matildas to build on their remarkable momentum and deliver the silverware we have sought since our 2010 AFC Women's Asian Cup™ victory.

International hosting rights represent a major victory for Australian football. We successfully secured hosting rights to the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup™, repositioning Australia as a premier destination for international football. This achievement not only reinforces our reputation as world-class event hosts following the FIFA Women's World Cup™ but also provides another opportunity to inspire the next generation of players and strengthen our relationships with our neighbours across the Asian football family.

In 2024 we made significant strategic investments in expanding our National Team support to help build the necessary foundations to keep us competitive and ready ahead of major tournaments, across all our National Teams.

Success at youth level was also a focus as we continued investing heavily in these teams. Reviews undertaken by our new National Team leadership ensured increased focus across all our National

Team functions – from administration to sports performance and science. These changes promise immediate impact across the planning, preparation and ultimately performance of our National Teams as they move into a new environment, especially at youth level where AFC and FIFA tournaments are held annually and biennially.

Football development remains central to our mission. Our Football Development Committee initiated – for the first time – a comprehensive Football Talent and Development Ecosystem Audit to map the journey of talented players, with the aim of strengthening a democratised environment where all stakeholders are entrusted and empowered to develop talent. We also initiated the development of the Emerging Matildas and Emerging Socceroos Championships concept to replace the National Youth Championships to further strengthen our talent identification and development pathways.

Preparation for the inaugural Australian Championship continued at pace throughout 2024. We hope this National Second Tier competition lays the foundation for a more robust football pyramid, providing additional opportunities for players, coaches and officials to develop within a competitive and professional environment.





## Business, Commercial and Financial Strength

Revenue growth demonstrates our increasing commercial appeal. Our revenue grew to \$124 million, reflecting the growing value of our brand and partnerships. While we are happy with this, we believe that there continue to be opportunities to increase the value of our brands and commercial activities to help reinvestment into our game from National Teams and especially to the grassroots.

Financial resilience underpins our long-term aspirations, despite short-term obligations. Football Australia has completed an important investment year in our four-year strategic cycle following the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. While our financial results show an accounting deficit of \$8.55 million for 2024, our cash flow from operating activities remains positive, with our cash and cash equivalents increasing to \$18.5 million. This demonstrates our fundamental financial health, prudent cash management, and ability to generate more cash than we spend.

Notwithstanding these positive indicators that contrast with the reported deficit, we are not satisfied with this financial performance. We have taken action by investing in enhanced financial strategy, management and governance systems. These measures will ensure future cost efficiency and operational effectiveness without compromising our strategic investments and growth initiatives as we approach significant tournaments in the coming years.

Broadcast partnerships seek to secure our commercial future and global visibility. We successfully transitioned to a new broadcast agreement with Paramount ANZ, including consolidated international broadcast rights – which locks Football Australia into a strong commercial position for our broadcast rights now and especially into the future, and with room to expand as we introduce new broadcast assets.

Strategic commercial growth continues through various initiatives. We have undertaken a strategic expansion of our commercial capability and assets and begun developing new brands to be launched in the coming year to strengthen commercial appeal.

We also work closely with the Australian Professional Leagues (APL) to ensure the A-Leagues' commercial success, recognising their positive steps forward under their new leadership.

## Grassroots, Community and Diversity

Community football continued to thrive as the heartbeat of our sport. Our community is blessed by approximately 4,000 clubs nationwide, with the vast majority providing affordable access to football for players of all ages and backgrounds. These clubs form the foundation of our game, embedded deeply into their communities, creating lifelong connections and fostering a love for football that transcends generations.

Digital infrastructure development offers both progress and challenges. While we embarked on an ambitious project in the PlayFootball v2.0 digital platform, and the Australian football community entrusted us with this project, we acknowledged that such significant infrastructure initiatives required substantial investment, patience and continuous effort. Despite the expected positives we expect our community to reap from such digital infrastructure in the future, we also realise these kinds of projects also bring challenges that typically accompany projects of this magnitude. These challenges especially affect our cherished grassroots community and the many volunteers upon whom our grassroots community relies. Accordingly, we continue to prioritise the improvement of this system to ensure our grassroots community benefits first and foremost.

Facilities development remained a critical focus area throughout 2024. We continued to collaborate with state and territory federations to address the critical shortage of facilities, particularly for girls and women, while working with our Member Federations and their local associations and clubs to advocate for improved facilities with local government bodies. This infrastructure is essential for providing safe, accessible spaces for all participants.

The strength of Australian football lies in its unity and shared purpose. Throughout 2024, we made some significant strides in fostering a more collaborative and unified football ecosystem.

Our leadership summits brought together key stakeholders from across the country, creating a forum for open dialogue, shared vision-setting and collaborative problem-solving. These gatherings proved to be a powerful unifying force, breaking down historical silos and building trust between different segments of our football community.

Values guide our approach to engagement and organisational culture. Through collaborative efforts across all levels of Football Australia, at the end of 2024, we developed a new set of values – Welcome, Ready, Connect, Excel and Protect – that we hope will underpin how we communicate, serve and support Australian football well into the future. These values are not mere words on a page but living principles that intend to guide our decisions and actions related to grassroots community football through to our National Teams, creating an empathetic and unified approach that strengthens Australian football's alignment, identity and purpose.





## Governance, Strategy and Sustainability

Constitutional renewal is necessary to strengthen our foundations. We continued the review of our constitution, seeking to create a more robust governance framework to serve Australian football into the future. This undertaking represents not an endpoint but a commitment to continuous improvement, as we establish a framework for periodic and frequent constitutional review. Through this disciplined approach to governance evolution, we aim to set new standards and eventually become the benchmark for best practice in sports governance across Australia, ensuring our foundations in the front office match the excellence we seek on the field.

Strategic principles create alignment across the football ecosystem. For the first time, Australian football stakeholders helped shape a collective set of principles as the Enduring Growth Principles of Australian Football, which replace all previous strategic principles previously set by Football Australia. These principles, when socialised, will connect, align and empower all stakeholders to contribute uniquely – given their distinct circumstances, conditions, capabilities, capacity and capital – to the five enduring principles crafted.

Financial sustainability drives our long-term planning. We initiate the process of developing a comprehensive four-year budget to ensure long-term financial sustainability while starting to invest in the necessary strengthening of our internal functions across National Teams, finance, human resources, legal affairs, and government engagement and relations to deliver operational excellence and an evolution to a mindset of service and support.

## Looking Ahead

As we move forward, we continue to establish clear priorities that will guide Football Australia's strategic direction in the next 12 months.

First and foremost, we will provide strategic leadership that serves the entire football ecosystem, including stakeholders, members and the Australian football family. This leadership approach emphasises collaboration, transparency and a service mindset that continues to put football's best interests at the centre of all decision-making.



For our National Teams, we have two immediate priorities – supporting the Subway Socceroos on their path to FIFA World Cup 26™ qualification and finalising the appointment of a National Head Coach for the CommBank Matildas. These appointments and the support structures around them will be critical to our international success in the coming years.

We will work collaboratively with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to deliver the Women's Asian Cup 2026™, showcasing Australia's hosting capabilities while creating meaningful legacy outcomes for women's football. This tournament presents an opportunity to qualify our Matildas for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2027™ in Brazil while strengthening our position within Asian football.

Competition structure enhancements remain central to our strategy, with immediate focus on driving the rollout of the new Emerging Championships and preparing for the inaugural Australian Championship. These initiatives will transform our football pyramid, creating clearer pathways and more meaningful competitive opportunities for players at all levels.

Infrastructure development continues with progress on plans for a dedicated home of football in Australia, which will serve as a central hub for football excellence and innovation. Simultaneously, we will evolve the PlayFootball v2.0 digital platform to improve user experience, ensuring our technological infrastructure matches our physical facilities in supporting football's growth.

Finally, we will deliver on the findings of the Talent Development Ecosystem Audit, implementing evidence-based approaches to player development that will strengthen our future competitiveness. This work, coupled with the socialisation of our Values and Enduring Growth Principles, will align all stakeholders around a unified vision for Australian football's future.





## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the work of our executive leadership and all our valued staff during a demanding year. Our CEO, James Johnson, and his entire team have managed a complex and challenging operational environment throughout 2024. Their unwavering efforts to implement our strategic initiatives while navigating significant ecosystem and organisational changes have laid groundwork for the improvements we seek to achieve in the coming years.

We acknowledge both Graham Arnold, who served as Subway Socceroos coach with distinction, and Tony Gustavsson, who concluded his tenure as CommBank Matildas coach, along with their trusted support staff. We thank them for their incredible efforts in continuing to elevate the performance and brands of our National Teams.


Last year, we bade farewell to director Amy Duggan, who stepped down after four and a half years of impactful service. A former Matilda and respected advocate within the Australian football community, Amy especially helped shape Football Australia's focus on football development and National Teams.

Our football family forms the backbone of the sport. We express our sincere gratitude to our Member Federations for their tireless work in helping represent, support and serve our cherished grassroots community; the approximately 4,000 clubs and their volunteers who represent both the heart and backbone of Australian football; the APL and A-League clubs for their efforts in developing professional football; Professional Footballers Australia for their partnership and advocacy for players; and the Women's Football Council for their continued contribution to helping Football Australia advance women's football.

We also thank our commercial partners and sponsors for their continued support, and express appreciation to government partners at all levels for their assistance with facilities and programs.

Football belongs to all Australians. The dedication of our National Teams' players and staff in representing Australia makes us proud, while the passion and commitment of our grassroots community inspires us daily. The passion of football fans across the country continues to inspire us as we build a stronger future for the game we all love.

The year 2024 was one of purposeful investment in Australian football's future – a time when seeds were carefully sown across all aspects of our game. This deliberate and strategic approach will continue through 2025 as we further strengthen our foundations and prepare for the opportunities ahead. Our philosophical decision to focus on capability building now positions us perfectly to reap the rewards during the world-class events of 2026 and 2027, including the FIFA World Cup™ and our hosting of the AFC Women's Asian Cup™. What we plant today, we will harvest tomorrow – creating a legacy of success both on and off the field for generations of Australians to enjoy.



**Anter Isaac**

Chairman  
Football Australia





# CEO'S REPORT



**As I reflect on this reporting period, I am delighted that 2024 marks the culmination of years of strategic vision and execution, bringing profound transformation to Football Australia. Our achievements this year are not simply milestones; they are the realisation of a long-term agenda to elevate football's standing domestically and globally, driven by values of equity, a strategic vision for the sport, innovation and high performance. This has been a year of delivery – a year that demonstrates not just what football can achieve, but what Football Australia has become: a modern, confident and globally aligned institution.**

From the outset of my tenure as CEO, we set out to reposition football as a central force in Australian sport and culture. Our mission was clear: rebuild trust, unify a fragmented stakeholder landscape, and unlock the full potential of a game played by millions yet historically underserved. Central to this was the implementation of a bold global-local strategy – one that respected our unique Australian identity while aligning with global best practice and attracting global events such as the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ and AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026™. The years since have demanded difficult reforms, steadfast discipline, and a long-term vision in an often-short-term world. In 2024, that vision came to life. Without question, this has been our most defining year, setting the foundations for an exciting future.

Aligned to the four-year football cycle, the 2024 Financial Year served as a critical investment and reset phase for Football Australia. Revenues grew to \$123.7 million – a record figure reflective of growing commercial maturity, the momentum of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, and strategic broadcasting arrangements. However, in line with our forward-looking strategy, this growth also enabled essential reinvestments across key pillars of our operations.

Our Group recorded a net loss after tax of \$8.5 million, equivalent to -6.9% of revenue (compared to a modest loss of \$242,000 in 2023). While this outcome reflects the significant acceleration of strategic initiatives, our financial position remains strong, with increased cash reserves and positive net equity. These results underscore our deliberate strategy: to reinvest in the foundations of growth, build capability, and future-proof the organisation during a critical window ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026™ and FIFA World Cup 26™.

Key areas of investment included a full calendar of high-performance programs across all 11 National Teams, expansion of our broadcast and media platforms under the new Paramount Australia & New Zealand agreement, foundational work for the 2025 launch of the Australian Championship, enhancements to data security and national registration systems, and record support for grassroots and inclusion initiatives such as Coles MiniRoos.

2024 marked the first full year under the Chairmanship of Anter Isaac. Together with Deputy Chair Jaclyn Lee-Joe and our broader Board, we have completed another strong year, and on behalf of my Executive team, I would like to thank them for their leadership and support.

Our commercial, brand and broadcast achievements in 2024 represent the crystallisation of a long-term strategic vision – not merely a financial milestone, but a fundamental recalibration of how football creates and delivers value in a dynamic landscape. Initiated in 2020, our strategy was built on a bold reassertion of control over football's most valuable assets: our intellectual property, narrative authority, brand equity and distribution channels. Through world-class storytelling, elevated visibility and brand-led engagement, we positioned Football Australia not just as a rights holder, but as a value architect within the broader ecosystem. This strategic pivot has enabled us to cultivate deeper, more aligned partnerships and to amplify football's relevance as both a cultural cornerstone and a commercial growth engine. In 2024, this approach reached a tipping point, transforming football's content and brand into a structural asset with generational impact.

The signing of our 10-year strategic partnership extension with Nike – the largest commercial agreement in Football Australia's history – reflects not just financial growth, but strategic synergy. It stands as a case study in how aligned values and shared





ambitions can drive long-term value creation. This partnership goes well beyond kit supply. It embeds Nike as an innovation partner, a platform for youth development, and a brand amplifier that shares our vision for football as a tool for inclusion, identity and progress. In a rapidly evolving sports economy, this partnership exemplifies what modern commercial excellence looks like.



In media, we delivered a groundbreaking broadcast agreement that reshapes the way football is delivered, consumed and monetised. For the first time, Football Australia controls the full suite of Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA content, including National Team games and youth competitions, under a unified rights strategy. This deal elevates our narrative power, enhances fan access, and positions us to pioneer digital fan engagement, live analytics and immersive viewing experiences. Content is no longer a commodity – it is an asset that drives national identity, commercial revenue and global influence.

Our new National Teams Collective Bargaining Agreement, co-created with Professional Footballers Australia (PFA), sets a global benchmark. This performance-based, revenue-aligned framework embeds gender equity, safeguards financial sustainability and links player earnings to Football Australia's

commercial trajectory. It is the first agreement of its kind in global football and signals a new era of player–employer collaboration. It also ensures our iconic National Teams – the CommBank Matildas and the Subway Socceroos – continue to thrive in an environment that values both excellence and equality.

Across our National Teams, 2024 has been a year of competitive progress and cultural impact. The CommBank Matildas continued to redefine what success looks like in Australian sport. Their Olympic campaign captured the imagination of the nation, building on the momentum and visibility achieved during their historic FIFA Women's World Cup™ run. Notably, they extended their record-breaking home sell-out streak to 16 consecutive matches, a testament to their unparalleled popularity and the nation's fervent support. This streak, which began with the pre-World Cup send-off against France in July 2023, concluded with a match against Chinese Taipei in Melbourne in December 2024. Not only have they consolidated their status as Australia's most beloved team, but they've also become a symbol of pride, progress and purpose. Their performances have inspired a new generation of players and fans, and they continue to set the benchmark for women's sport in Australia and beyond.

The Subway Socceroos, meanwhile, ended the year with purpose and promise. A string of strong performances in their FIFA World Cup 2026™ qualification campaign underscored the depth, resilience and tactical maturity of our senior men's program. In late 2024, we bade farewell to Graham Arnold, who served the Socceroos over many decades with dedication and passion. The appointment of Tony Popovic as Head Coach ushered in a new era – one that blends the grit and international experience of our proud footballing tradition with a fresh, strategic vision for the future. With Popovic at the helm and a growing pipeline of talent, the Socceroos are well positioned to build towards another successful qualification campaign and beyond.

Our Youth National Teams also enjoyed a standout year, reflecting the investments made in talent development and football intelligence. The CommBank Young Matildas qualified for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Colombia 2024™ after earning

bronze at the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ earlier in the year. Despite not advancing past the group stage, the team showed strong promise against high-calibre opponents and reinforced Australia's standing on the world stage. Meanwhile, the Subway Joeys (U-17 Men's team) had a highly successful 2024, winning the ASEAN U-16 Boys' Championship and qualifying for the AFC U17 Asian Cup™ Saudi Arabia 2025 after topping their group with confident performances. These results reflect the depth and potential in our youth ranks and are a testament to the impact of our restructured Football Analysis & Intelligence Department, which has delivered enhanced scouting, analytics and high-performance infrastructure.

In a historic development, Football Australia also launched the inaugural Australia Women's National Futsal Team in 2024. Under the guidance of Head Coach Miles Downie, the team made an impressive debut by finishing top of their group at the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup™ Qualifiers in Uzbekistan. This initiative not only expands the National Team pathway but also underscores Football Australia's commitment to growing the women's game across all formats.

Beyond elite performance, 2024 was a defining year for participation. Football remains the most played team sport in Australia, and participation has continued to surge, driven by the Matildas' legacy and our work to modernise football's pathways. The launch of our new national registration system, PlayFootball v2.0, has unified data collection and registration across all levels of the game. This new platform is not just a back-end tool, it is a doorway to Australia football. It simplifies access, personalises experiences, and allows Football Australia to target resources where they are most needed. It's a symbol of the digital transformation we are driving across the organisation.

The rapid growth of football in Australia presents both opportunities and challenges. As participation surged by 12% in 2023 following the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, we saw even higher growth in 2024, driven by the Matildas' Women's World Cup success and their continued Olympic campaign at the Paris 2024™ Olympic Games. However, this unprecedented





surge has revealed a significant strain on our facilities network. The national football infrastructure deficit, now estimated at \$2.9 billion, remains the greatest threat to sustaining this momentum. Across the country, clubs are reporting capped registration numbers due to lack of access to quality pitches, lighting and changerooms, particularly in high-growth outer suburban and regional areas. In many cases, female participants still do not have access to appropriate or inclusive amenities. Football Australia has continued to lead a strong advocacy agenda to address this challenge. We have made an urgent call to governments at all levels to co-invest in community football infrastructure, not simply as an investment in sport, but as a tool or health, education, social cohesion and economic recovery. Our platform has resonated widely with candidates and policymakers, reinforcing the idea that football's growth is an opportunity to invest in national priorities, not just sporting outcomes. The case is clear: football builds communities, drives inclusion, and delivers economic and health returns. We cannot allow this growth moment to slip away because of underinvestment in bricks and mortar.

The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ was a generational milestone for Australian football, and in 2024, we began to truly understand its enduring impact. Football Australia's Legacy '23 Post-Tournament Report, released in February, demonstrated the transformative effect of the tournament across participation, visibility, infrastructure and economic return. While the report celebrated significant progress – including \$398 million in government investment, over 1.29 million tickets sold and a \$1.32 billion economic impact – it also highlighted the critical challenge ahead: a \$2.9 billion shortfall in football-specific infrastructure funding. With more than 2,400 clubs at capacity, the need for urgent and coordinated investment has never been clearer. Legacy '23 laid the foundations for generational change, but our work continues – to ensure that the legacy of 2023 is not just remembered but realised in every community across Australia.

2024 was a historic and transformative year for the A-Leagues and the Australia Cup, underscoring the deepening maturity and momentum of domestic football. For the Liberty A-League Women,

the post-World Cup surge translated into record attendances, club memberships, broadcast audiences and outbound transfers, with the season becoming the most attended women's league campaign in Australian sporting history. The introduction of new teams, an expanded Finals Series, and the launch of the AFC Women's Champions League™ further cemented the league's status as a world-class development pathway for CommBank Matildas and emerging stars. Meanwhile, the Isuzu UTE A-League Men delivered one of its most compelling seasons to date, headlined by the Central Coast Mariners achieving a historic treble, record outbound transfer revenue, and the successful debut of expansion club Auckland FC. Innovation remained central to the league's trajectory, with the introduction of live video assistant referee (VAR) announcements and a new transfer system reform reflecting the evolution of the Australian football economy. The year also saw the A-Leagues continue to push the boundaries of major events and community impact, with the expanded Unite Round, All Stars doubleheader and Pride Celebration reinforcing football's leadership in inclusion, entertainment and fan connection.

The 10th edition of the Australia Cup once again captivated the nation, with a record number of dramatic Cupsets, a 24% rise in viewership and unforgettable stories that showcased the depth of talent across the football pyramid. The competition culminated in Macarthur FC claiming their second Australia Cup title with a hard-fought 1–0 victory over Melbourne Victory in front of a passionate crowd at AAMI Park. This triumph highlighted the growing stature of the tournament as a premier national competition and reaffirmed the strength and competitiveness of our domestic clubs. From the Festival of Football in Darwin to grassroots heroics and high-stakes drama in the final, the Australia Cup in 2024 embodied the opportunity, ambition and connection that define Australian football.

2024 also saw us announce the Australian Championship, our new National Second Tier competition, which we will launch in October 2025. This competition will create a sustainable bridge between the elite and community game, with 16 clubs drawn from eight NPL Premiers and eight Foundation Clubs.







More than a new league, it is a new future for Australian football, one that rewards ambition, promotes regional talent, and stimulates local economies through new investment and jobs. The National Second Tier is our statement of intent: that every player, every region and every club should have the opportunity to rise.

In 2024, Football Australia released its inaugural Domestic Transfer System Report, marking a strategic inflection point in our efforts to professionalise player movement and unlock the value of Australian talent. The report revealed a 125% increase in international transfer activity for men, with fees tripling to \$17.4 million, 74% of which involved players aged 18 to 23, and a 200% rise in fees in the women's game, led by record-breaking transfers. These outcomes reflect years of foundational reform, including the implementation of the Domestic Transfer Matching System and the phased abolishment of the outdated 'Caceres Clause'.

More than administrative updates, these reforms incentivise talent development and ignite a domestic football economy where clubs are rewarded for producing elite players. The system is now a key lever in building a sustainable, high-performing football pyramid – and we are just getting started.

Football Australia has also deepened its role in diplomacy, education and regional engagement. Through partnerships with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Sports Commission and PacificAus Sports, we have delivered new football exchanges across the Pacific including activity for our U20 and U17 Men's National Teams in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. These are not merely symbolic. Our strategy with these engagements helps position football as a driver of regional relationships, female empowerment and soft power influence. An example of this was the launch of our PacificAus Sport partnership in Honiara, which was attended by the Solomon Islands Prime Minister and the Australian High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands. Initiatives like our Pacific activity abroad and the First Nations 'Invitational XI' in our National Youth Championships here at home demonstrate how we are using football as a force for connection and inclusion.

Football's cultural capital has also reached new heights. In 2024, football didn't just feature in the national conversation, we led it in many respects. The emotional resonance of the game was evident in the way Australians rallied behind our National Teams, attended matches in record numbers and engaged online in unprecedented ways. More than 70% of Australians tuned in to the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, and that momentum carried forward into 2024, with packed stadiums, soaring broadcast audiences, and digital engagement that consistently outperformed historic numbers and other codes. Football has become a vessel for identity, community and inspiration, not only for traditional fans but for new audiences who see their values reflected in the stories our sport tells.

This shift has not happened by chance. It is the result of five years of consistent and intentional brand work: elevating football's identity with clarity and confidence, investing in high-quality content and storytelling, and ensuring that every touchpoint, from grassroots to global, reflects the inclusive, progressive values of the game.

Football now speaks with authenticity and authority, and in doing so, it has cemented its place in Australia's social and cultural fabric.

We close 2024 not with a sense of arrival, but with clarity about what comes next. The next four years will be among the most consequential in our sport's history. We will deliver the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026™, continue to pursue FIFA tournaments, expand our digital platforms, execute our grassroots and football reform agenda, and work tirelessly to close the infrastructure gap. At every step, we will ensure the benefits of this growth flow back to the football community: the players, coaches, referees, clubs and volunteers who make this game what it is.

This report is not a victory lap. It is a record of progress, a snapshot of maturity, and a blueprint for the road ahead. Football Australia has become more than a governing body, it is now a strategic actor in sport, business, society and diplomacy.

For me, this year represents a culmination. The vision we laid down in 2020 – of a more powerful, united and world-class football system – is no longer aspirational. It is operational. It is delivering. But like all great teams, we are already thinking about the next play.

To our Board, our staff, our players, our fans, our partners and every member of the football family: thank you. Your belief, contribution and passion have brought us here. The legacy we build from here on belongs to all of us.

**James Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Football Australia



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (FY2024)

The 2024 financial year served as a pivotal investment and reset phase for Football Australia, as we move to four-year football cycles to ensure footballing activity is better synchronised with business operations and budget. Revenues grew to \$124 million. This enabled investments in line with the long-term objectives of building momentum, capability and fan engagement post the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ and ahead of major tournaments in 2025 and 2026, including the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026™ and FIFA World Cup 26™.

The net loss after tax of the Group for the year ended 31 December 2024 was \$8,546,000 (2023: \$242,000), equivalent to -6.9% of revenue. The Group remains in a positive net equity position and cash equivalents increased from the prior year.

FY2024 saw significant acceleration in strategic initiatives and a strong organisational change mandate across the Group. Key areas of investment and focus included:

- **Investment in our high-performance programs**, including the expansion of National Team activities. The 2024 program included a full schedule of domestic and international camps and participation in 10 major international tournaments by 11 National Teams.
- **A comprehensive reset of our broadcast strategy**, including the transition to a new broadcast agreement with Paramount Australia & New Zealand, whereby

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) broadcast rights have been acquired and bundled into the agreement. Additionally, broadcast streaming services with our Member Federations were consolidated, impacting the financial statements through higher broadcast revenues, expenses and distributions.

- **Early-stage planning, stakeholder engagement and commercial groundwork for the inaugural National Second Tier competition**, now officially named the Australian Championship, launching in 2025.
- **Ongoing investment in fan experience, digital innovation and community programs**, particularly Coles MiniRoos, as part of Football Australia's commitment to long-term participation growth and inclusivity.
- **Strengthened governance and operational support**, including the renewed national registration platform, improved data security and enhanced debtor management. While complex and challenging, these efforts are critical for ensuring transparency, security and alignment with both national and international standards in the administration of football in Australia.

These initiatives, while essential to the game's future trajectory, required substantial up-front investment, shaping the financial outcomes for the financial year. They underscore Football Australia's commitment to sustainable growth and strategic expansion across its commercial, community and high-performance pillars.

The 2024 Financial Year has set the foundations for a more diversified and sustainable revenue model, which will be essential in continuing the growth and professionalisation of Australian football in the years to come.





# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (FY2024)

OPERATING REVENUE		
SUMMARISED PROFIT & LOSS (\$'000)	2024 12 MONTHS	H2 2023* 6 MONTHS
Broadcast & Other Rights	19,360	6,397
Sponsorship	23,336	9,824
Gate Receipts	13,441	3,673
Hosting of Events	10,002	2,203
Grants	16,281	5,941
Prize Money	45	9,503
Registration & Affiliation	16,024	7,741
Merchandising	3,577	762
Legacy Funding	5,273	5,000
Cost Recoveries	6,936	2,363
Finance Income	319	141
Other	9,404	10,071
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	123,998	63,619

OPERATING EXPENSES		
SUMMARISED PROFIT & LOSS (\$'000)	2024 12 MONTHS	H2 2023* 6 MONTHS
National Team and Employee Travel	20,951	13,609
Broadcasting and Broadcasting Rights	11,519	2,933
Event Hosting	9,112	5,205
Marketing & Media	5,067	3,557
Sponsorship & Licensing Expenses	4,005	1,498
Player and Employee Payments	49,823	27,695
Other Team Expenses	2,159	1,295
Professional & Consultants	2,382	1,246
Communication & Technology	6,976	2,684
Operating & Administration Costs	5,347	2,140
Expected Credit Losses Expense	4,118	276
Depreciation & Amortisation	1,070	363
Other	1,495	715
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	124,024	63,216

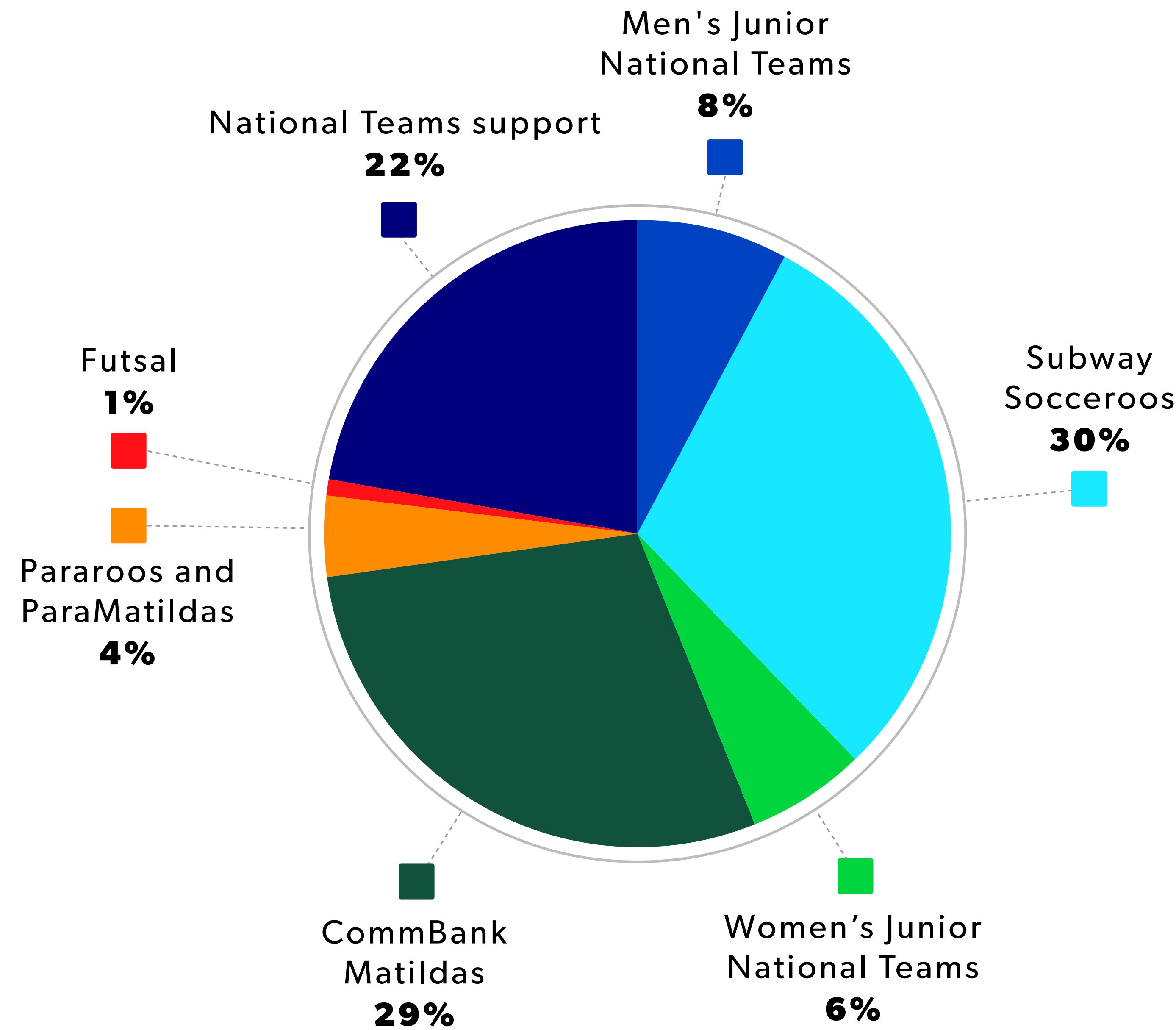
SUMMARISED P&L		
SUMMARISED PROFIT & LOSS (\$'000)	2024 12 MONTHS	H2 2023* 6 MONTHS
Revenues	123,998	63,619
Expenses	-124,024	-63,216
SURPLUS /(DEFICIT) (Before Grants & Distributions)	-26	403
Grants & Distributions	-8,520	-645
NET DEFICIT	-8,546	-242
SUMMARISED BALANCE SHEET		
Total Assets	76,010	72,952
Total Liabilities	63,150	51,546
NET ASSETS / NET EQUITY	12,860	21,406

\*Please note our fiscal year end date has been changed from 30 June, 2023 to 31 December 2023. In accordance with accounting standards the accompanying financials cover a short accounting period from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023.





# NATIONAL TEAMS



The National Teams program has been extended to include the management of the para football teams and will include both male and female futsal teams in 2025.

**The Subway Socceroos** commenced Round 3 of the AFC Asian Qualifiers™ for the FIFA World Cup 26™, delivering strong performances that maintained national engagement and solidified Australia’s positioning on the world stage.

**The CommBank Matildas** hosted 7 highly attended international matches in Australia, continuing the team’s record-breaking streak of sell-out performances and reaffirming their status as one of the country’s most beloved National Teams. **The lead-up to the Paris 2024™ Olympic Games** focused investment in high performance, commercial support, and brand amplification for the Matildas’ Olympic campaign.

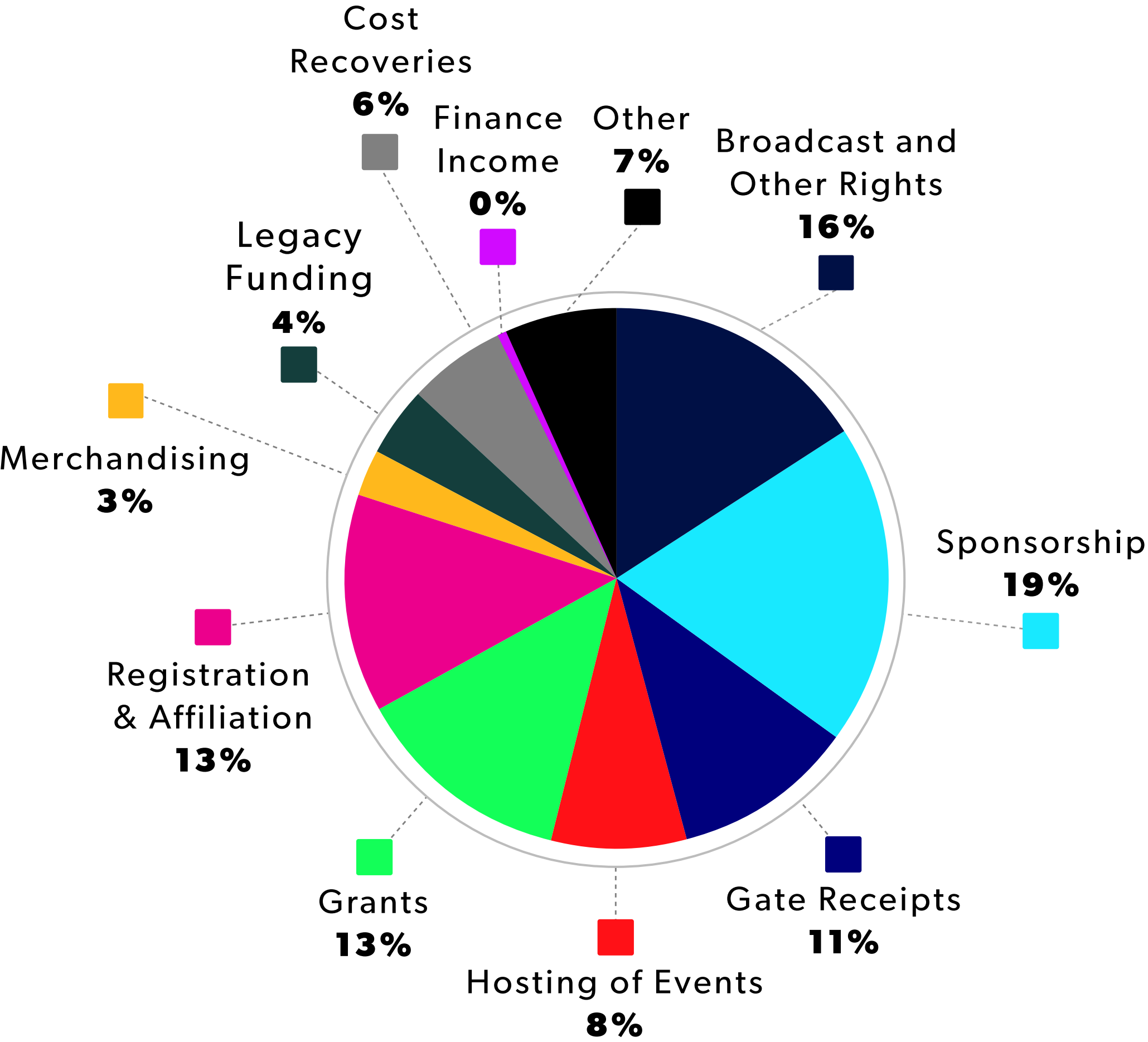
**National Teams support** includes centralised National Team resources, coaching staff, team management personnel and medical support team. Key investments in the year include an uplift in data and analytics, as well as costs associated with coaching transition.





# REVENUE REVIEW

Total revenue for the 12-month period to December 2024 was **\$124 million**, up 9% on FY2023, and slightly less than double the revenue reported in the six months to December 2023 (**\$64 million**). Revenue comprises the following key categories:

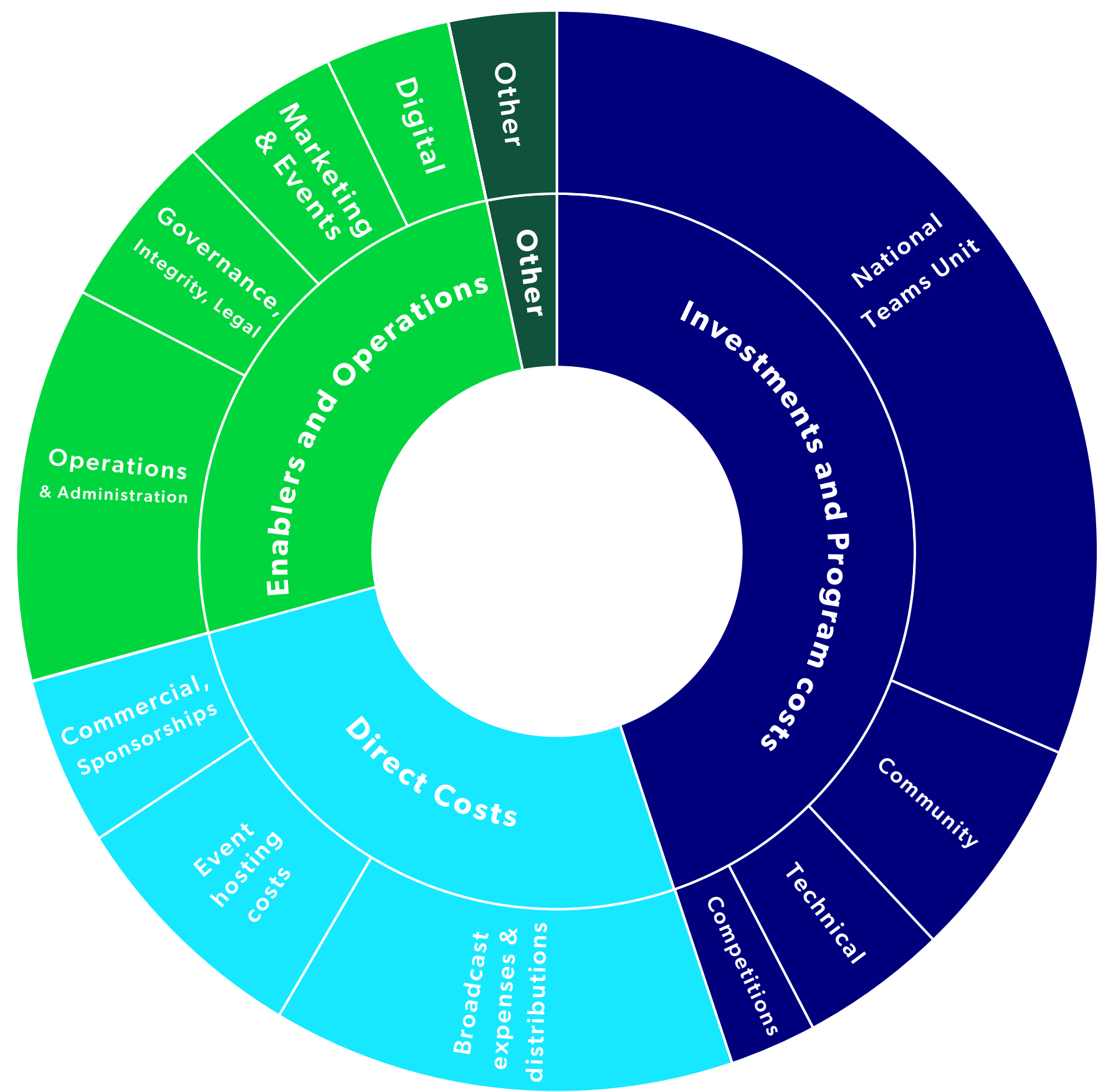


- Broadcast and Other Rights**  
Broadcast revenue totalled **\$19.4 million** (FY2023: **\$11.4 million**), driven by the commencement of a new broadcast contract in August 2024 and the consolidation of streaming services. Note: On a net basis, Broadcast revenues declined during 2024.
- Sponsorship**  
Sponsorship revenue rose to **\$23.3 million** through the continuation of key partnerships including CommBank (Matildas naming rights), Subway (Socceroos naming rights), and LEGO®, alongside new commercial agreements including Coles (MiniRoos naming rights), Lion (Australia Cup Naming rights) Allianz and LCI.
- Gate Receipts**  
The increase in hosted matches and strong fan engagement underpinned gate receipts in 2024 which increased to **\$13.4 million**.
- Hosting of Events**  
Revenue from state and territory governments rose to **\$10 million** reflecting the strong support for our National Teams and competitions across the country.
- Grants**  
Grants revenue totalled **\$16.3 million**, reflecting the continued support received from government agencies and international bodies including FIFA and the AFC.
- Prize Money**  
Prize money was negligible in 2024, reducing to **\$45,000** (FY2023: **\$19.4 million**), consistent with the football calendar.
- Registration and Affiliation**  
Whilst participant National Registration fees were held flat in 2024, registration and affiliation revenue grew to **\$15.9 million** due to ongoing growth in participation and increased coaching course revenues.
- Merchandising**  
Merchandise sales totalled **\$3.6 million** as match attendance and fan engagement remained strong.
- Legacy Funding**  
FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023™ was transformative, elevating football and driving lasting change for women’s sport in Australia. Underpinning this success is the *Legacy* ‘23 strategy, launched in 2021, with a focus on five pillars: high performance, participation, leadership & development, international engagement, and facilities. In 2024, **Legacy funding (\$5.3 million)**, enabled continued investment across the five pillars of the strategy. These initiatives position the organisation to deliver long-term outcomes for the game domestically and on the world stage. The remaining **\$1. 5m** relates to other fees and one-off cost recoveries.
- Other Revenue**  
All other revenues not captured under specific categories are allocated to Other Revenue. Significant items include domestic product and integrity fees, cost recoveries and fees from APLCO. Together these revenues totalled **\$15.1m**.





# OPERATING EXPENSES



## Investment and Programs

### • National Teams Unit

A total of \$40.9 million was invested in the National Teams’ high-performance programs. This included \$9.5 million in player payments under the revenue-sharing model agreed in 2023, which ensures equal treatment of the Socceroos and Matildas. Key activities supported by this investment included the Socceroos’ FIFA World Cup™ qualification campaign, an intensive international fixture schedule for the Matildas following the Olympic Games, and participation in major tournaments such as the ParaMatildas World Cup™ and the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup™ (Young Matildas).

### • Community

Football Australia’s community programs are designed to grow participation and foster engagement across Australia’s diverse communities. Delivered in collaboration with Member Federations, Associations, and Clubs, these initiatives include Coles MiniRoos, Club Changer, Sporting Schools, and targeted Multicultural Youth and Settlement programs. Dedicated investment has also supported the advancement of women’s football, with a focus on building a lasting legacy following the FIFA Women’s World Cup™.

### • Technical Development

In 2024, Football Australia’s technical development initiatives centred on four key areas: coach education and accreditation, referee and match official development, talent identification, and the enhancement of youth talent pathways. These priorities reflect a strategic commitment to strengthening the game’s technical foundations and supporting long-term player and official development across all levels.

### • Competitions

Key domestic competitions marked significant milestones in 2024. The Australia Cup celebrated its 10th anniversary, while the National Youth Championships were expanded to support broader talent development. Preparations also progressed for the launch of the National Second Tier competition—now officially named the Australian Championship—with early-stage planning, stakeholder engagement, and commercial groundwork well underway ahead of its 2025 debut.

Direct costs represent the costs directly associated with commercial revenue streams.

### • Broadcasting and Broadcasting rights

Broadcasting expenses increased to \$11.5 million in 2024 (2023: \$4.3 million), primarily due to the transition to the new broadcast agreement with Paramount Australia & New Zealand, which now includes AFC rights. Football Australia also supported the consolidation of Member Federation streaming rights and production services. While the overall net impact on profit was minimal, the new arrangements contributed to higher broadcasting revenues, expenses, and distributions.

### • Event Hosting

Football Australia hosted 7 Matildas friendly matches during 2024 and 6 Socceroos’ qualification matches. These expenses are directly linked to match day revenues such as ticket sales and host government revenues.

### • Commercial, Sponsorship & Licensing costs

Costs associated with sponsorship, licensing and revenues fluctuate in line with the match program and sponsor activity.

Enablers and Operations represents the costs of management and enabling functions, including overheads such as rent, insurance, and technology.

In 2024, this encompassed key investments in the development of PlayFootball v2.0, a comprehensive review of data and IT security, and increased legal and governance-related activity.

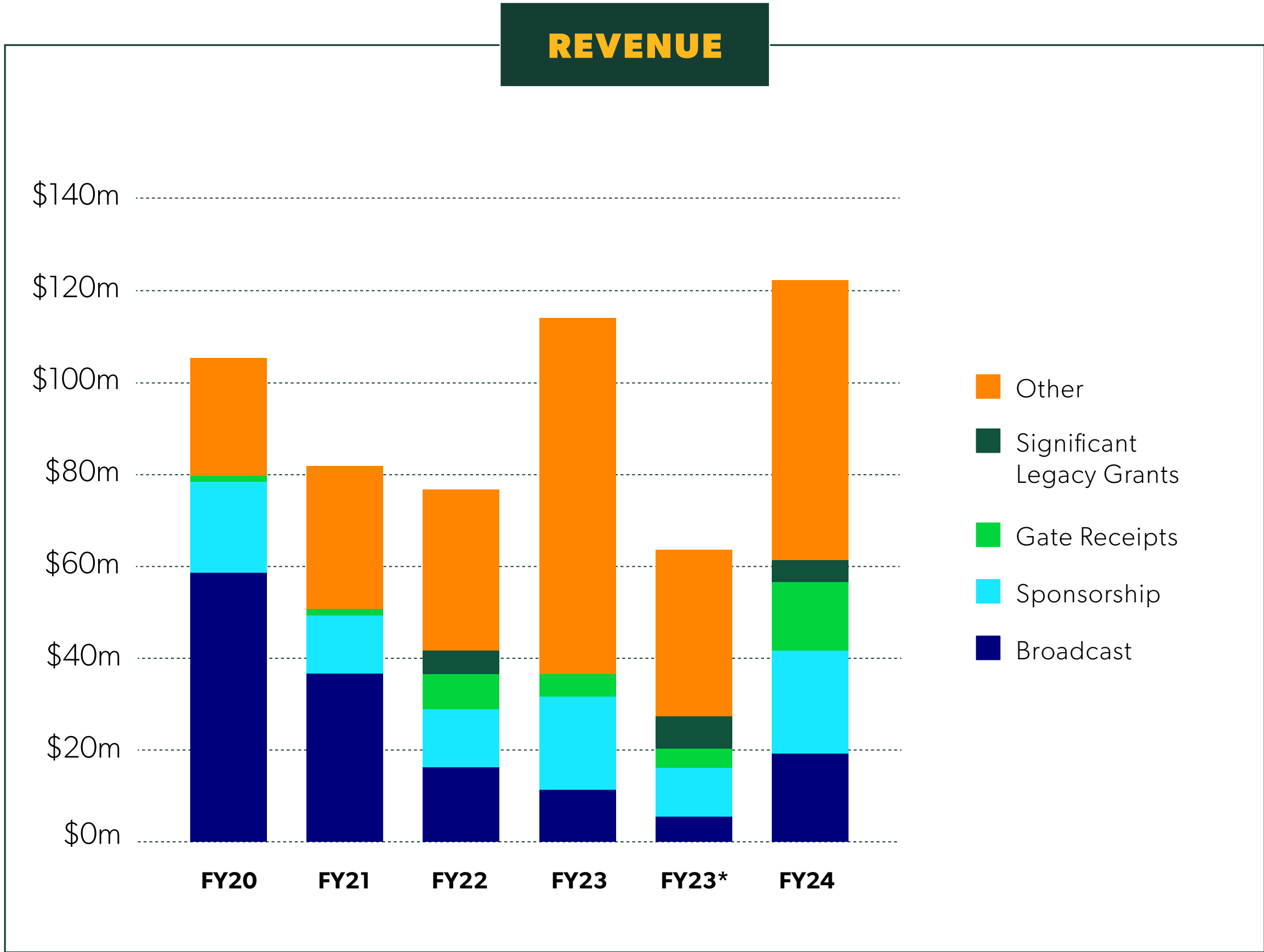
### Other

Includes non-cash expenses of depreciation and amortisation and an increase in expected credit loss provision.

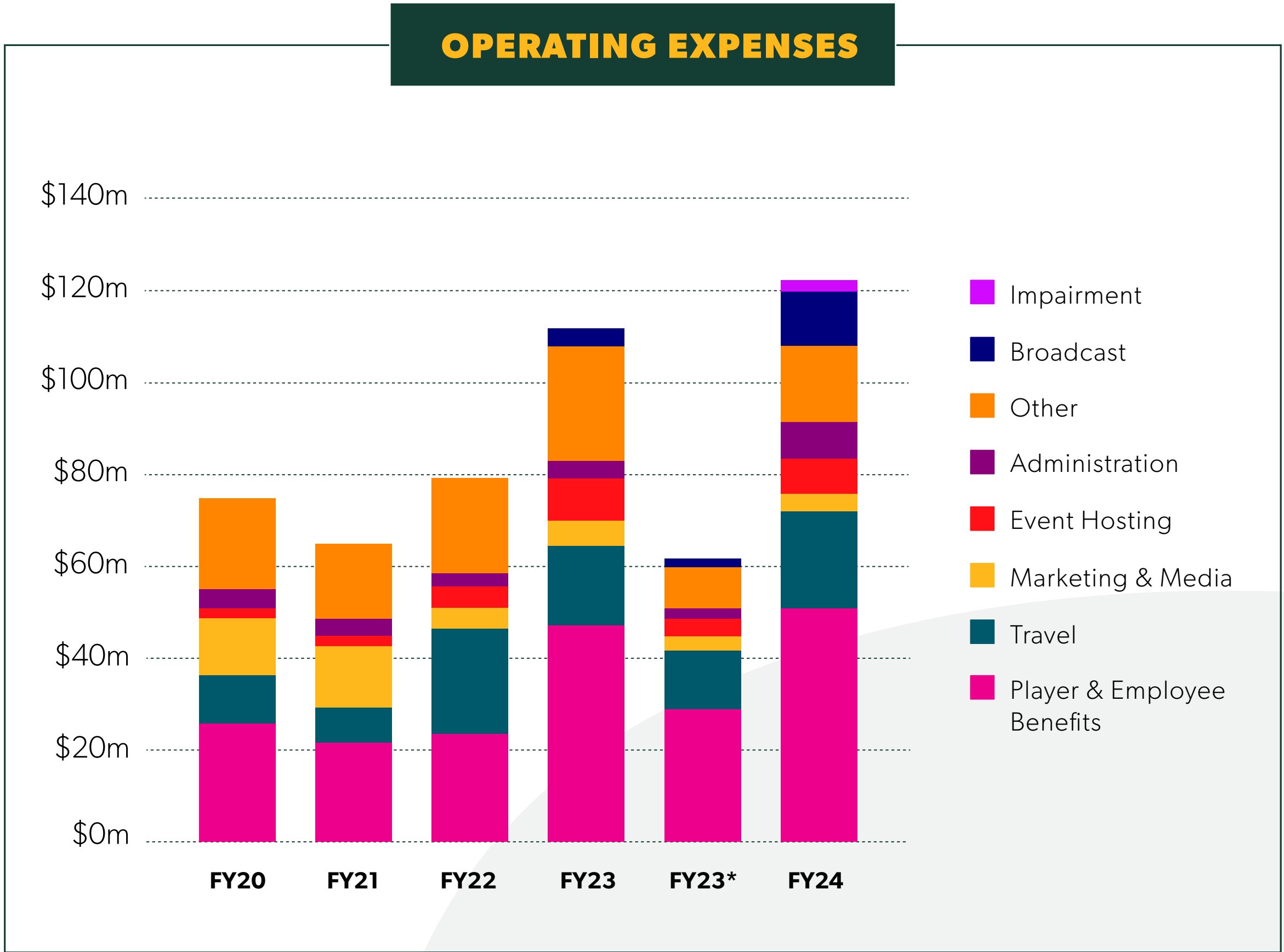




# KEY HISTORICAL FINANCIAL COMPARATIVES



\*H2 FY23 – 6 month period from 1 July to 31 December

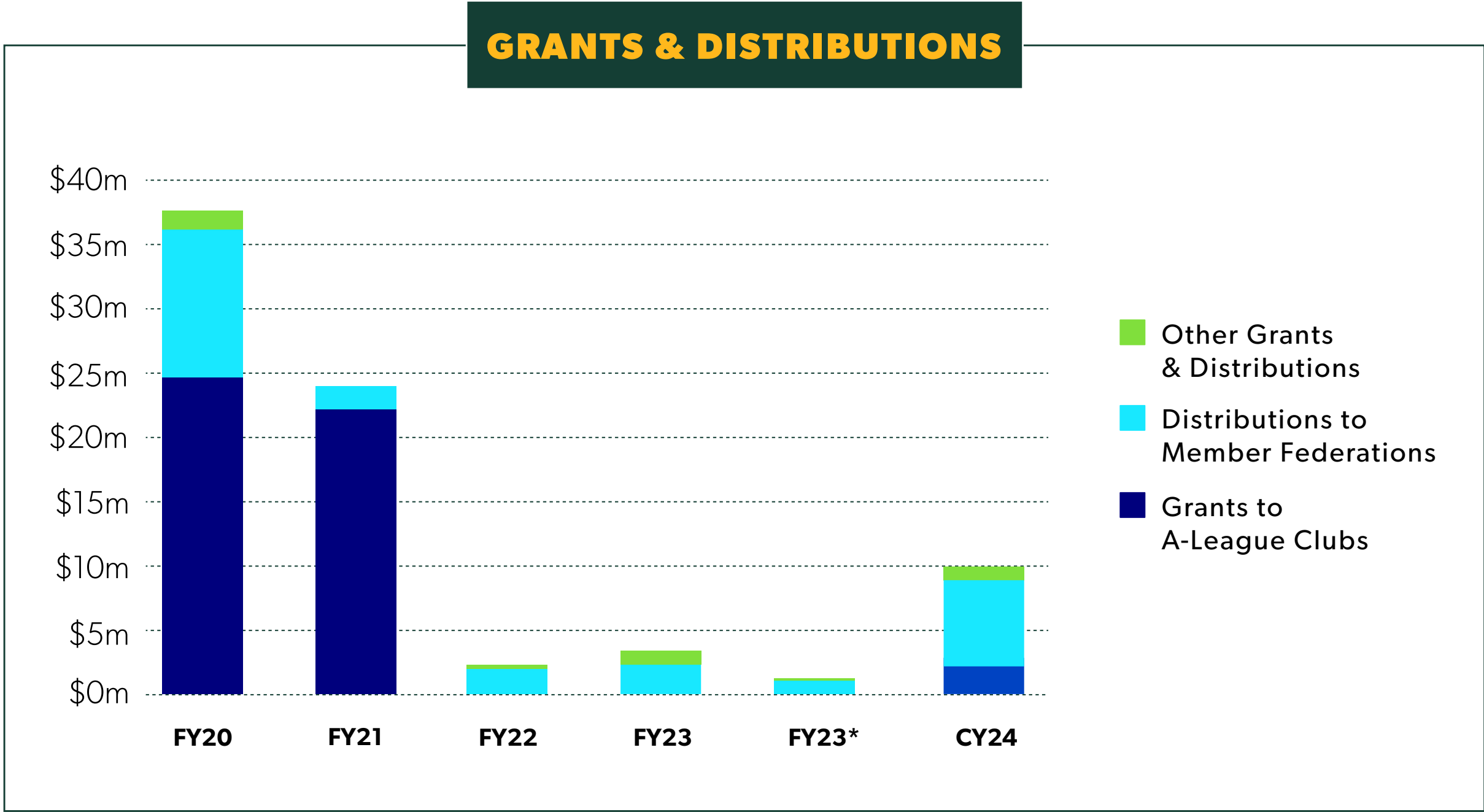


\*H2 FY23 – 6 month period from 1 July to 31 December

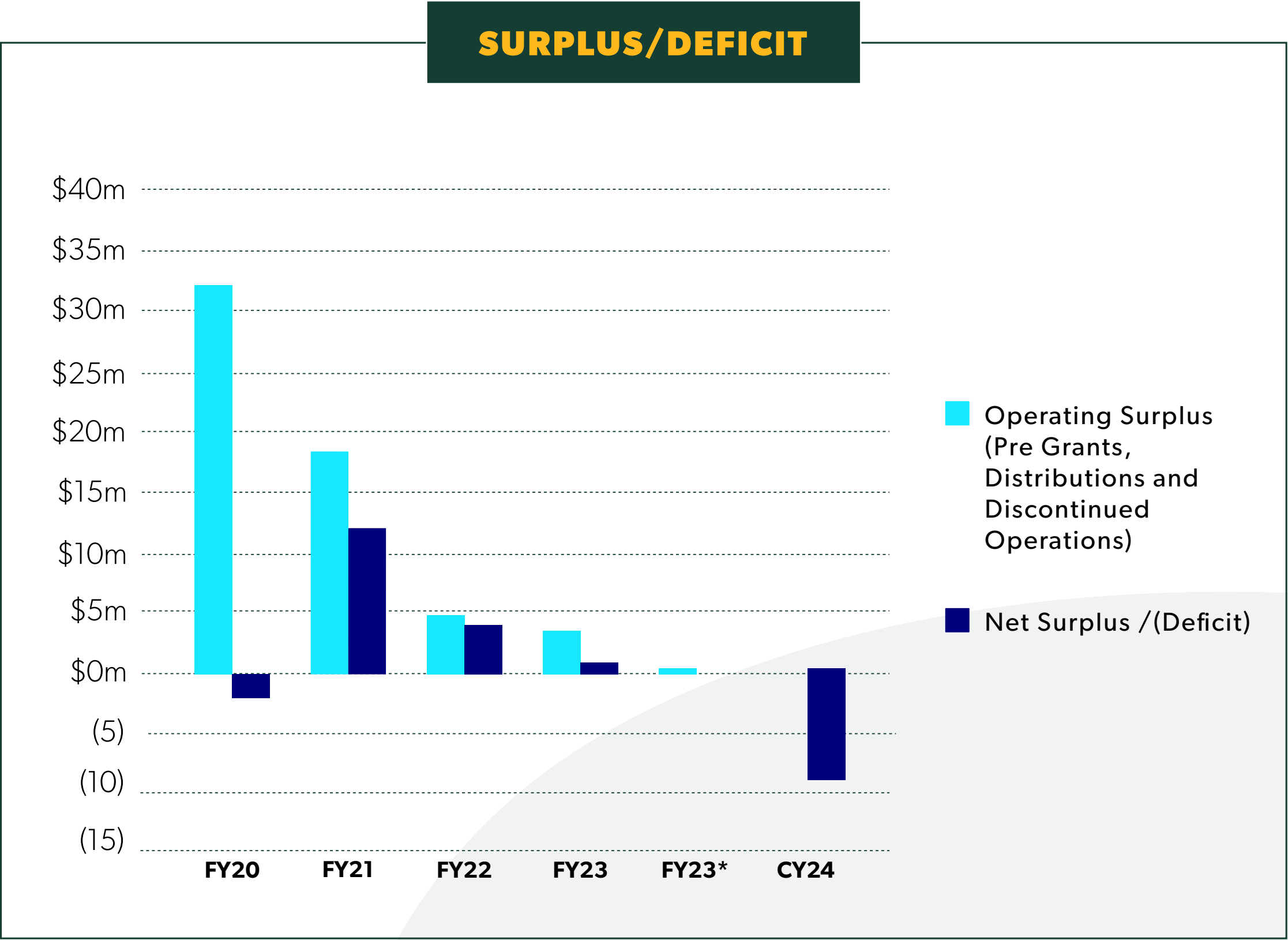




# OPERATING SURPLUS



\*H2 FY23 – 6 month period from 1 July to 31 December



\*H2 FY23 – 6 month period from 1 July to 31 December





# FIFA FORWARD 3.0 AND AFC ENHANCE PROGRAMME FUNDING



## FIFA FORWARD 3.0

The funding provided to Member Associations through FIFA Forward 3.0 is reflective of FIFA's commitment to building a stronger foundation for the growth of football.

Football Australia and FIFA have agreed upon the following Contract of Agreed Objectives (CAO) that guides how funding is invested.

“ To drive the National Teams program under Football Australia's One Football Strategy 2022-2026 Pillar 2: Elite Teams & Pathways by 2026, which includes support to boys' and men's National Teams (U17, U20, U23, Senior) and girls' and women's National Teams (U17, U20, Senior). ”

FIFA Forward 3.0 affords Football Australia USD 1.25 million per annum towards operational costs comprising: 1. *Unconditional* funding; 2. *Conditional* funding that is dependent on the successful implementation of five new integrity and governance initiatives. In accordance with Football Australia's CAO, *Specific Project* funding aligned with the *National – Team support* category totalling USD 2.525 million was approved by the Board of Directors and FIFA to support the Subway Socceroos throughout the crucial Round 3 AFC Asian Qualifiers™ – Road to 26 (FIFA World Cup 26™ Qualification Fixtures).



## AFC ENHANCE PROGRAMME

The Enhance Programme aims to facilitate the strategic and long-term development of football in the AFC's Member Associations and Regional Associations through the provision of funding for activities and projects aligned with four funding categories determined by the AFC.

In 2025, Football Australia invested Enhance funding towards a pre-tournament camp for the U-23 Men's National Football Team ahead of the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Qatar 2024 and the CommBank Young Matildas participation at the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2024.

Preliminary approval was also secured to invest funding available to Member Federations through the *Stadium* tenet to LED signage board projects in Victoria, Adelaide and Darwin.



# PLAYFOOTBALL v2.0 REGISTRATION PLATFORM



In November 2024, following an intensive period of development and testing, Football Australia successfully launched its new digital registration platform, PlayFootball v2.0, ahead of the 2025 season. Far more than a simple upgrade, PlayFootball v2 represents a significant transformation in how football participants engage with the registration process.

The platform introduces a new, streamlined approach to managing payments, enabling funds to be split seamlessly across clubs, associations, Member Federations and the governing body Football Australia. This innovation supports a more transparent and efficient distribution of resources throughout the football ecosystem.

While the launch has presented challenges for all stakeholders, Football Australia acknowledges and deeply appreciates the patience, resilience and support shown across the football community. In particular, Football Australia acknowledges the dedicated volunteers who continue to play a critical role in facilitating football at the grassroots level.

While there is still work ahead to enhance the platform's functionality and improve user experience, the progress made to date lays a solid foundation for ongoing system improvements.

Football Australia remains committed to working closely with all partners to refine PlayFootball v2.0 and ensure it delivers long-term benefits for the entire football community.





# COMMERCIAL REPORT



## CORE REVENUE GROWTH

**It was a landmark year in 2024 for Football Australia's commercial program, marked by significant growth and innovative expansion across all revenue streams.**

Football Australia's commercial partner family continues to grow, driven by new major partnerships with Coles, Allianz, LCI Education, MILO® and Hahn, as well as a number of expanded agreements with existing sponsors.

After a number of strong years of commercial growth across Football Australia's National Teams, investment into community programs and competitions was a priority in 2024 and in November 2024, Hahn joined as the new naming rights partner for the Hahn Australia Cup, aligning Australia's most connected community to professional sporting competitions with a strong commercial partner that shares Football Australia's vision for football's growth and passion for community clubs.

Football Australia was also delighted to announce Coles as the naming rights partner of the MiniRoos grassroots program in 2024, a critical partnership to ensure continued participation growth and retention among children aged 4–12. Coles is an organisation that shares its vision for promoting an active and healthy lifestyle through play, and Football Australia looks forward to helping Australians eat and live better every day together.

In addition to these two major naming rights partnerships, Football Australia is also thrilled to have welcomed globally renowned insurance partner Allianz on board, a partnership launched on the eve of the Paris 2024™ Olympics, and which elevated the nation's support for the CommBank Matildas through their Olympic campaign and beyond. Allianz is supporting all National Teams, and Football Australia is particularly thankful also for the support for the National Para Teams.

LCI Education also joined as Creative Higher Education Partner, forming a truly innovative commercial partnership that combines one of the world's leading creative arts institutions with the beautiful game.

Finally, in another partnership announcement that put a smile on the face of many Australian families, MILO® joined Football Australia as a support partner of the Coles MiniRoos program, delivering even more value to its grassroots community in 2024 and beyond.

Football Australia continues to be incredibly proud of its family of commercial partners, whose direct investment and promotion of the game, teams and programs directly contribute to its collective success.

One highlight of the commercial program is the Growing Football Fund, supported by CommBank, which continues to play a pivotal role in advancing women and girls' involvement in football.

By focusing on both attracting and retaining players and coaches in the game, the Growing Football Fund is helping to cultivate supportive and inclusive environments where women and girls feel empowered to stay in the game.

**“ In 2024, the Growing Football Fund's Community Grant Program supported 121 community clubs and associations across Australia. ”**

These grants supported a wide range of initiatives aimed at driving participation, enhancing the participant experience, promoting confidence, and reducing barriers to playing.

The Growing Football Fund also supported a range of coaching initiatives focused on the upskilling and connection of community coaches. This included hosting networking events, presenting at club development days, and the development of a Coaches Hub, which houses session plans and resources to guide the development of community coaches.



The continued expansion of Football Australia’s broadcast footprint in 2024 reinforced its commitment to delivering high-quality football content to audiences across the country.

The key milestone was the successful extension and expansion of its partnership with Paramount Australia & New Zealand, a broadcast agreement that secures increased visibility for Football Australia’s National Teams content for the next four years, and crucially will include major events such as the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Australia 2026™, the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027™ and the FIFA Women’s World Cup Brazil 2027™. Coverage of the Hahn Australia Cup final on live free-to-air broadcast was further secured.

Paramount’s continued commitment as the Home of Australian Football provided strong broadcast numbers in 2024.

In 2024, the Subway Socceroos average national total audience increased 39% year on year, while achieving their biggest digital audiences ever across 10 Play and Paramount+. The Subway Socceroos versus China PR match in Adelaide on 10 October was the biggest Socceroos audience since 2022.

Meanwhile, the CommBank Matildas’ final game in Australia prior to the Paris 2024™ Olympics, played against China PR on 3 June and coupling as Lydia Williams’ final match for the CommBank Matildas, saw the biggest football audience ever on Network 10.

It was Network 10’s widest reaching event of the year, while also securing the biggest ever **HOME CROWD ATTENDANCE OF 76,798 FANS AT ACCOR STADIUM.**

Football Australia’s licensing and merchandise strategy saw further progress in 2024, capitalising on the continued momentum of the CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos and strong crowd attendances, alongside an expanded online store offering. Spend per head at matchday retail outlets increased for both the Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas in 2024, highlighting the fans’ love for their teams and propensity to show their passion through teamwear and other fan gear.

# INNOVATION AND NEW PROJECTS

**In 2024, Football Australia’s commercial team made significant progress in the world of data and streaming, collaborating with Member Federations and evolving a commercial rights partnership with IMG ARENA into a suite of innovative, future-focused projects. These will encompass production, connectivity and a range of emerging technologies, which will inform future commercial strategies around content distribution, fan engagement and partner integration.**

Key highlights included successful delivery of data and streaming rights (more than 2,000 livestreams and over 8,500 matches) whereby real-time match data is being collected across Football Australia and Member Federation competitions. In doing so, Football Australia implemented the foundational processes and workflows to streamline operations across multiple tiers of Australian football under a new centralised model, which has led to further commercial opportunities.

The next stage of this project led to a cross-functional review and new strategy for ‘Football Australia-produced’ matches (that is, games that sit below the premium broadcast content produced by Paramount Australia & New Zealand). With the strategy developed, a national Broadcast Production Services Request for Proposal was undertaken for key Football Australia and Member Federation competitions, to establish a new delivery framework for the end-to-end production of more than 4,000 games annually, including the Australia Cup (early rounds), National Second Tier, Youth National Teams, National Youth Championships, National Futsal Championships, National Para Football Championships and all National Premier League matches.

Further developments across connectivity services and media distribution will follow in 2025, resulting in significant efficiency and consistency of media product, alongside enhancement for fans and commercial partners alike. The achievements of 2024 will lay the foundation for unlocking significant growth and innovation across the whole Football Australia and Member Federation ecosystem.





# ACTIVITY REPORT

## AFC AWARDS

**Australian football has been recognised as best in Asia with Ellie Carpenter honoured as AFC International Player of the Year (Women), and Football Australia winning back-to-back grassroots gold.**

At the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Awards held in October 2024, Women's National Team player, Ellie Carpenter, was named the inaugural AFC Asian International Player of the Year (Women), while Football Australia claimed the prestigious AFC President's Recognition Award for Grassroots Football (Gold) for the second consecutive year.

These honours celebrate the impact of Australian football at both elite and grassroots levels, highlighting Carpenter's exceptional achievements and the success of Football Australia's Club Changer program in advancing community football in Australia.

Ellie Carpenter, a stand-out member of the CommBank Matildas, has been recognised as a leading force in women's football globally. Her award as AFC Asian International Player of the Year (Women) reflects her commitment to the game, inspiring young players worldwide and raising the profile of Australian football on the international stage. Overcoming an ACL injury, Carpenter played a pivotal role in helping the CommBank Matildas reach the semi-finals of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, and secured her third consecutive Olympics qualification.

Football Australia's back-to-back Gold Award from the AFC recognises its success in grassroots football, particularly through the innovative Club Changer program. Hailed as a 'world-leading initiative' by the AFC, the Football Australia Club Changer program, now involving 1,000 grassroots football clubs across Australia, provides critical support to community clubs and volunteers. The program develops volunteers' skills to deliver quality football experiences and encourages clubs to engage in community-driven football activities.

Football Australia's grassroots programs, supported by strong partnerships with CommBank, Coles and MILO®, have enabled the ongoing growth of football in communities nationwide. These partnerships and the commitment of community clubs have played a pivotal role in Football Australia's success, particularly through a joint initiative with the Australian Sports Commission, which focuses on female participation as the first module within the Club Changer program.

James Johnson, CEO of Football Australia, commented: 'We are incredibly proud of Ellie Carpenter's achievement as AFC Asian International Women's Player of the Year, and thrilled to receive the AFC President's Recognition Grassroots Award for a second consecutive year. These awards reflect our dedication to supporting football at every level and our commitment to our community stakeholders, partners and volunteers who work tirelessly to bring the game to life on pitches across Australia every week.'

This recognition reflects the Club Changer program's role in fostering the next generation of Australian footballers and promoting a sustainable future for grassroots football.

These accolades mark another proud moment for the Australian football community, laying a strong foundation for the sport's future.





# 'TIL IT'S DONE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The CommBank Matildas 'Til It's Done brand campaign continued to make its mark beyond the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, achieving significant marketing and brand industry recognition both locally and globally. Driven and executed by the Marketing, Media and Digital/Social teams, the campaign set new standards in innovation, creativity and connection, garnering outstanding and meaningful results.

*Notably, the campaign achieved international recognition at the 2024 Asia Pacific (APAC) Effies, winning a total of 7 awards, including the prestigious Grand Effie.*

Additionally, the campaign secured a Bronze Lions at the 2024 Cannes Lion International Festival of Creativity, highlighting excellence in Brand Storytelling.

## APAC Effies

- Grand Effie – Winner
- Brand of the Year – Winner (Matildas)
- Marketer of the Year – Winner (Football Australia)
- David vs. Goliath Category – Silver ('Til It's Done)
- Media, Entertainment & Leisure Category – Gold ('Til It's Done)
- Events Category – Gold ('Til It's Done)
- Social Change for Good Category – Gold ('Til It's Done)

## Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity

- Entertainment Lions for Sport – Bronze
- Print and Publishing – Social Behaviour & Cultural Insight – Finalist
- Industry Craft – Copywriting: Print & Publishing – Finalist
- Lions for Sport – Fan Engagement/Distribution Strategy – Finalist

## B&T

- Best Integrated Ad Campaign – Winner
- Award for Bravery – Finalist
- Award for the Diversity – The Work – Finalist
- Marketing Team of the Year – Finalist
- Best of Out of Home Campaign – Finalist
- B&T Women in Media Best Ad Campaign – Winner

## Award

- Advertising – Press & Outdoor – Poster Advertising Tactical – Silver
- Craft copywriting – Best use of copywriting – Bronze
- Craft Copywriting – Verbal Identity – Silver

## Mumbrella

- Marketing Team of the Year – Finalist
- Awards for Innovation – Finalist
- Best Use of Real-Time Marketing – Finalist
- Media Brand of the Year – Finalist

'Til we play our first international match  
we claim our first trophy  
we qualify for our first World Cup  
we score our first World Cup goal  
they call us the Matildas  
we get a write-up in the papers  
we win our first World Cup match  
we play in Sydney 2000  
the stands start filling up  
we're women's Asian Cup champions  
we get our own jersey  
we score a World Cup hat-trick  
we make the quarter finals  
we outdo ourselves in Tokyo 2020  
they build the Home of the Matildas  
we play a World Cup on home soil  
we make the quarter finals again  
other sports pause and watch us  
we smash a history-making penalty  
we storm into the semis  
the whole country takes notice  
the whole world takes notice  
we're all over every front page  
everyone knows our names  
girls dream of being us  
boys are wearing our jerseys  
over 11 million watch us live  
we score an unforgettable goal  
the crowd gets to its feet  
we unite Australia  
women's football gets funded  
grassroots football gets funded  
we bring it at Paris 2024  
we go again in 2027  
we leave a legacy...

We're not done #tilitsdone





# DIGITAL GROWTH

Football Australia’s digital footprint continued to grow in 2024 off the back of a home FIFA Women’s World Cup™ in 2023 and a historic men’s FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ campaign.

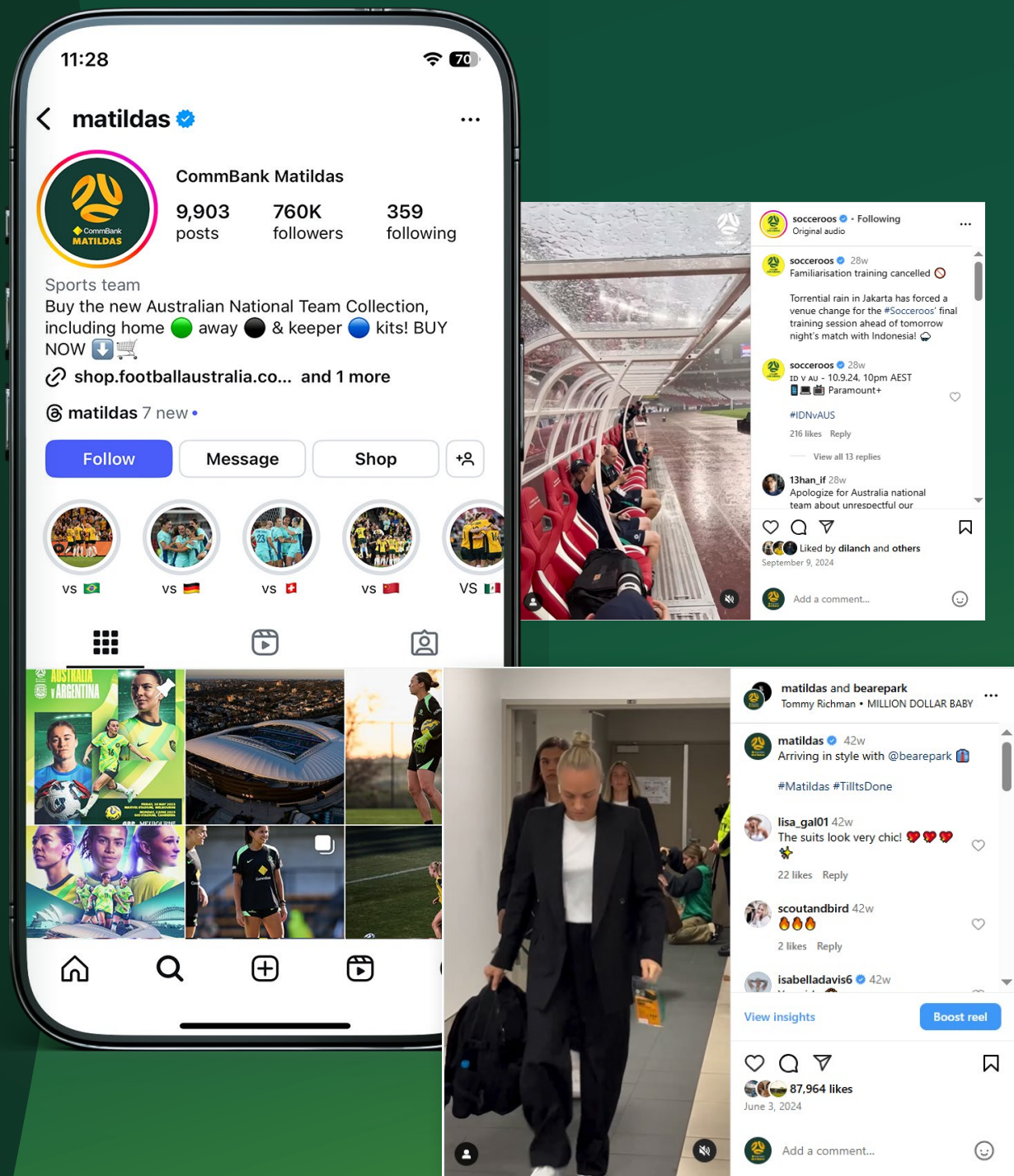
Social media following across Football Australia’s brands in 2024 totalled 4,630,402 followers, an increase of 9.4% on calendar year 2023.

The biggest growth in followers and opt-ins came from fans who first signed up to follow the CommBank Matildas during the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ and are still following.

The CommBank Matildas’ accounts continued to deliver the highest levels of video views across all Football Australia social media brands, delivering an astounding 210 million video views in 2024.

THE COMBINED TOTAL OF 3,372,406 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS REPRESENTS A 5.8% INCREASE ON CALENDAR YEAR 2023.

Instagram and TikTok are seeing Football Australia’s growth trajectory across social media continue, with YouTube also providing a strong platform for growth heading into 2025.



Football Australia YouTube has grown 21.6% IN SUBSCRIBERS SINCE 2023.

Football Australia’s digital content teams were busy, producing and publishing OVER 17,000 UNIQUE PIECES OF CONTENT IN 2024.

BOTH SENIOR NATIONAL TEAMS HAVE A STRONG PRESENCE ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA AND FIRST-PARTY DATA SUBSCRIBERS.





# PARTICIPATION CENSUS

In 2024, the National Participation Report highlighted record-breaking growth in participation numbers across grassroots and community football, driven by the legacy of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ and the ongoing success of the CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos.

The report confirmed football's position as Australia's most popular and fastest-growing sport, with over 1.9 million participants nationwide – an 11% increase compared to 2023.

In addition to the success of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ and Australia's National Teams, Football Australia's innovative grassroots initiatives – particularly the Club Changer, Football Australia's Club Development Program – in combination with the tireless work of the nine Member Federations and volunteer workforce have been pivotal in achieving these results.

## KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE 2024 NATIONAL PARTICIPATION REPORT



**TOTAL PARTICIPATION**  
Increased by 11% to 1,911,539 participants



**WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION**  
Increased by 16% to 221,436 participants



**REGISTERED COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS**  
Increased by 19% and 26% respectively, reflecting a growing workforce to support the game



**OUTDOOR FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION**  
Increased by 10% to 640,170 participants



**SOCIAL FOOTBALL ENGAGEMENT**  
Increased by 13% to 174,846 participants



The award-winning Club Changer Program, supported by the Australian Sports Commission, has been a groundbreaking initiative, providing tailored club support to over 1,000 grassroots clubs across the country. Launched in February 2023 as part of *Legacy '23*, the program's outcomes include enhanced club operations, increased volunteer recruitment and retention, and a focus on creating welcoming environments for women and girls.

James Johnson, CEO of Football Australia, emphasised the transformative impact of these initiatives: 'The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ inspired a generation, and we are determined to harness that momentum to unite and grow football across the country. Through programs like Club Changer, we are empowering community clubs to deliver quality football experiences while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability remain at the heart of our mission.'

Johnson also highlighted the significance of partnerships in achieving these milestones: 'Our success is a shared achievement with our Member Federations, local associations, grassroots clubs and community volunteers. Programs like the Growing Football Fund supported by CommBank have provided vital resources to over 200 community clubs, fostering opportunities for women and girls in football and enabling the next generation of coaches, referees and players to thrive.'

**“ Over the past 12 months we also welcomed to our commercial family partners in Coles and MILO®, whose passion for grassroots football is helping Football Australia and our Member Federations to deliver increased opportunities for more girls and boys to participate in football via programs such as MiniRoos and Sporting Schools. ”**

Football Australia's focus on diversity and inclusion has been a cornerstone of its grassroots efforts. The National Volunteer Focus Group brought together 28 clubs to address challenges in volunteer recruitment and retention, with a particular emphasis on engaging women and girls. The resulting action plans aim for a 40% women, 40% men and 20% flexible roles structure, ensuring gender balance and inclusivity across all levels of the game.

The report also notes the substantial growth in schools and community football programs, **WITH A 13% INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION AND A 21% RISE IN FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA'S SPORTING SCHOOLS PROGRAMS, WHICH ENGAGED 158,700 STUDENTS NATIONWIDE.**

Building on the success of the 2024 participation numbers, Football Australia will continue to innovate and invest in grassroots football through initiatives like Club Changer and the Growing Football Fund. These programs, combined with strategic partnerships and community-driven development, will remain central to Football Australia's vision for the future of the sport.





# COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

## CLUB CHANGER

**Club Changer, Football Australia's Club Development Program aims to protect and enhance clubs; make them stronger and more resilient; lead them in building welcoming and inclusive cultures; and educate them on positive environments for players, coaches, volunteers and officials, while planning for long-term viability and success.**

Hailed as a 'world-leading initiative' by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), the Club Changer program – now involving over 1,000 grassroots football clubs across Australia – was awarded the AFC President's Recognition Grassroots Award: Gold for the second consecutive year.

'This award reflects our dedication to supporting football at every level and our commitment to our community stakeholders, partners and volunteers who work tirelessly to bring the game to life on pitches across Australia every week,' James Johnson, CEO of Football Australia.

Club Changer has become the gateway for a range of Football Australia initiatives, and over the last 12 months, hundreds of clubs across the country and football ecosystem have been able to access funding opportunities through the CommBank Growing Football Fund and once-in-a-lifetime National Team match

experience. Through the program, thousands of club volunteers and participants have accessed one-on-one tailored club support, in-person workshops and conferences and online webinars for enhanced learning opportunities.

Using the modules on Game Plan, clubs have been able to identify priority areas for development. Through collective support from Football Australia and Member Federations, clubs have worked to create action plans that link support and resources to help them achieve their season goals. The results from a collaborative approach to developing inclusive and welcoming environments for women and girls can be seen in the 2024 National Participation Report:

Women and Girls participation has  
**INCREASED BY 16% (30,000)**

Female Coaches registration has  
**INCREASED BY 24%**

Female Coles MiniRoos participation  
**INCREASED BY 21%**

## Club Changers of the Year

Nominations for Club Changers of the Year were received from across Australia, with Sunbury United FC (Metropolitan) and Millthorpe Junior SC (Regional) standing out from numerous other commendable nominees due to their unwavering commitment to making football more inclusive, accessible and safe for both club members and the broader community.

Sunbury United FC, from Victoria, has transformed significantly by implementing initiatives to address gender inclusivity and expanding the club's female programs, leadership and coaching initiatives. Millthorpe Junior SC strategised to combat the challenge of dropout rates, and to promote female participation, particularly among girls aged 11–15 years old, while also focusing on the implementation of strong safeguarding measures within the Club.

## Club Changer Open Training Session – CommBank Matildas

Over 2,000 members – from 1 and 2 Star Club Changers – including participants, coaches, committee members, parents and others, had the incredible opportunity to attend the CommBank Matildas Club Changer Training Session. This exclusive experience brought together passionate members of the football community to witness the nation's best in action and celebrate the ongoing impact of the Matildas' effect on grassroots football.





## Subway Socceroos Integration

Club Changers in different cities had the opportunity to be part of the Subway Socceroos' media announcements. Young players from 1 Star Club Changers, Adelaide Atletico, Adelaide Croatia Raiders, and Adelaide Victory were invited to attend the Subway Socceroos' media announcement at the Adelaide Oval in preparation for the match against China for the FIFA World Cup 26™ Qualifiers.

Future stars from the Mudgeeraba FC had a similar experience on the Gold Coast when they shared a unique moment with former Subway Socceroos' coach, Graham Arnold, in some kick-to-kick time on pitch.

## National Volunteer Focus Group

The National Volunteer Focus Group is composed of Club Changers from all Member Federations committed to working with the National Workforce Manager to grow their club in the volunteer space. The 2024 National Volunteer Focus Group comprised 28 Club Changers. Participating clubs received training to improve workforce and volunteer practices, while also providing feedback to Football Australia for improvements within the program. In 2025, there will be a new intake for the National Volunteer Focus Group, with Club Changer Champions supporting delivery and direction.

## Workshops and Webinars

In 2024, Football Australia's and Member Federations' Club Changer teams hosted over 18 workshops and 17 webinars to connect directly with clubs across the country to bring a personal touch to the program. Additionally, the Club Changer team hit the road, travelling around Australia to meet clubs face to face and make the program more accessible. The webinars covered a range of topics designed to help clubs grow and succeed. The most popular sessions were focused on safeguarding for community clubs – an essential step towards becoming a 2 Star Club Changer – drawing the highest attendance throughout the year.

## SPORTING SCHOOLS

**Football Australia is proud and excited to deliver quality football programs in a safe and educational environment at schools around the country. The aim is to spark the love of football in students through fun activities, games and challenges while also teaching future leaders fundamental physical, social and cognitive skills. In 2024, 158,700 students across the country participated in a Football Australia schools program.**

**Coach Delivered Programs** were the most popular choice of program in 2024, with Football Australia's over 200 coaches delivering more than 5,000 sessions that focused on encouraging children to be active and to develop their fundamental movement skills, in a safe and inclusive team environment.

**Football Australia's curriculum-aligned resources** provided teachers with an opportunity to educate their students both inside and outside the classroom. Of programs delivered in 2024, 27% were delivered by teachers who connected with Football Australia and received access to the Festival of Football and Skills Program resources developed during the CommBank Matildas' performance at the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™.

**Design a Football Competition** was launched mid-year to encourage students to use their imagination, creativity and inspiration to design a football while also supporting Australia's National Teams. With 1,100 entries, three winning designs were declared in August 2024, with first place receiving a signed CommBank Matildas' jersey and 50 custom footballs emblazoned with the winning design.





## COLES MINIROOS

**Coles MiniRoos is the official junior grassroots program of Football Australia, encompassing both the MiniRoos Club Football and MiniRoos Kick-Off programs for participants in football aged 11 and under. Coles MiniRoos grew by 11% to reach 288,138 participants nationally in 2024.**

**Coles MiniRoos Kick-Off** continues to support growth in grassroots football, engaging 17,000 registered participants in 2024 – with 34% female representation.

**MiniTillies**, the initiative of the Coles MiniRoos Kick-Off program, offering an introduction to football tailored for girls, grew by 39%, with 80 clubs now delivering this program nationwide.

**Coles MiniRoos Holiday Clinics** saw Football Australia's over 200 coaches continue to provide diversified program offerings for children, with just under 150 clinics delivered. The clinics were a popular format with a 146% increase in registrations throughout 2024.

**Connecting Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas to Coles MiniRoos** saw 188 clubs and 3,600+ Coles MiniRoos participants gifted an exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime experience to participate in the Coles Little Legends Lap, Coles Half-Time Heroes and Coles Player Mascots at home National Team matches hosted across six Member Federations.



## MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS

**Football Australia, in partnership with Member Federations, delivers two multicultural programs: the Multicultural Settlement Program (MSP) and the Multicultural Youth Program (MYP). MSP is an introductory program that offers football for newly arrived migrants aged 4–11. MYP is a modified football program designed for 12–24 year olds within culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Both programs aim to enhance social inclusion and connection by breaking down the barriers that exist for newly arrived migrants and CALD communities, enabling them to participate in football.**

In 2024, over 2,000 participants engaged in both MYP and MSP programs nationally. These participants attended programs across 50 local hubs, clubs and schools and across 30 multicultural tournaments and events, including those celebrating and run

throughout Harmony and Refugee weeks. Fifty young people were upskilled in CALD communities to deliver MYP and MSP programs, a key objective of this being to create educational and employment opportunities outside of direct program participation.

Young people like Mayen (Sudanese), Mahadi (Afghan) and Elham (Afghan) developed social skills, built friendships and developed the tools to pursue careers both within and outside of football.

Excitingly, over 250 program participants and their families attended their first-ever football matches, across both CommBank Matildas' and Subway Socceroos' home games. This was a wonderful opportunity to connect with Australian sporting culture and embrace football as a way to engage with their new home.

To achieve these outcomes, organisations across a range of sectors, including education, local government and community services, were engaged.







## FIFA FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS

FIFA Football for Schools is a program run by FIFA, which aims to contribute to the education, development and empowerment of around 700 million children worldwide. It seeks to make football more accessible to both boys and girls around the world by incorporating football activities into the education system. The program has been designed to promote targeted life skills and competencies through football.

Over the last 12 months, Football Australia, in partnership with Football Northern Territory and the NT Department of Education, has been delivering this program on behalf of FIFA.

The program first launched in Darwin in August 2023, with FIFA committing USD 50,000 to its implementation in regional and remote communities that had a high percentage of students identifying as First Nations.

**“ In addition to the financial contribution, 16,000 Adidas footballs were provided by FIFA to ensure every participating student walked away from the program with a football in hand. ”**

In early 2024, FIFA Football for Schools coach and teacher upskilling sessions were delivered with the NT Department of Education in Darwin-based schools where teachers, principals and administration staff learnt the skills required to deliver a FIFA F4S session to their students.

As of December 2024, the program has been delivered to 1,000 students and young people within the NT, and a particular highlight, was the delivery of the program to 250 students in the



Tiwi Islands, in what was the islands’ first delivery of a football program in over five years. Football Australia and Football Northern Territory staff delivered the program to students and teachers at Pularumpi School, Milikapiti School, and Tiwi College – schools that were recommended by Selina Holtze, Football Northern Territory’s President and current member of Football Australia’s National Indigenous Advisory Group (NIAG) and the Women’s Football Council.

Images from this trip and program delivery emphasise how well football was received on Melville Island as well as showing the joy and excitement these young people felt in being involved in the world game.

Following this trip, Football Australia has now received Sporting Schools booking requests from Tiwi Islands. This is the first time football has been requested by Tiwi Islands, in what is traditionally an AFL-dominated community.

The FIFA Football for Schools team was particularly excited to hear about the program’s delivery in the Tiwi Islands, with images and an overview of the key outcomes shared with FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, who has shared the program’s success to his social media channels.

Program delivery recommenced in the NT in February 2025.



# FIRST NATIONS



**As the Australian peak representative body for the ‘world’s best game’, Football Australia acknowledges and celebrates the invaluable contributions of First Nations people.**

First Nations communities continue to shape the nation’s football landscape, from grassroots to the elite level. In 2024, we saw the retirement of First Nations icon and football legend Lydia Williams, whose dedication and commitment to the game continues to inspire a new generation of footballers. We also saw the Invitational XI enter its second year: this new program was started in 2023 to find and develop First Nations football talent to compete at the National Youth Championships.

In this report, we proudly showcase the initiatives and achievements that emphasise the integral role of First Nations people in the sport, reaffirming our dedication to fostering a culturally rich and diverse football community.

## GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

### Football Australia’s National Indigenous Advisory Group

Since its establishment in 2021, the National Indigenous Advisory Group (NIAG) has played a pivotal role in driving First Nations and

reconciliation initiatives within Australian football. This esteemed group, comprising respected First Nations leaders and advocates, provides vital guidance and recommendations that shape inclusive policies and programs, ensuring First Nations voices remain central to our decision-making processes.

In 2024, the NIAG completed its first term and continued into its second iteration. Inaugural members Jade North, Karen Menzies, Narelda Jacobs and John Maynard completed their terms and were replaced by Ramone Close, Fred Agius, Mark Bridge, Belinda Duarte, Kim Farmer and Gema Simon.

In 2024, Football Australia appointed Justin Linwood as its inaugural First Nations Pathways and Programs Manager.

## PARTICIPATION

### Growing First Nations Football Participation Program

In August 2024, Football Australia was awarded a \$294,000 grant, funded through the federal government’s Play Well Participation Grant Program, underpinned by the Play Well Strategy produced by the Australian Sports Commission. The program aims to engage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to experience the social and physical benefits of football.

The Growing First Nations Football Participation Program was launched in the final weeks of 2024, piloting the national expansion of Football Australia’s Coles MiniRoos and Walking Football into First Nations communities. This program will establish holistic football programs (First Nations Coles MiniRoos, Walking Football for Mob, Coach Education and upskilling) in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Far North Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and New South Wales.

## PERFORMANCE

### Invitational XI National Youth Championships Pilot

The Invitational XI is a First Nations talent development program providing the opportunity for First Nations footballers to compete at the National Youth Championships. Following two successful pilots run in September 2023 and July 2024, the program has identified four players to be considered for future selection in National Team camps and programs. The Invitational XI fosters community pride and cultural celebration, establishing equitable access to high-performance football for First Nations youth.





## INVITATIONAL XI HIGHLIGHTS



**PARTICIPATION IN TWO CONSECUTIVE NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS,**  
with the female team progressing to semi-finals (2023) and quarter-finals (2024).



**IDENTIFICATION OF FOUR PLAYERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION IN**  
National Team camps.



**MORE THAN FOUR FEMALE PLAYERS**  
transitioned to state football representation.



**EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO**  
*National Indigenous Times* and the ABC along with Football Australia channels.



**OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES,**  
such as Summer Smith (top scorer) and Martin Dickerson (best attacker).



**PARTICIPATION FROM 54 PLAYERS,**  
representing over 68 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



# LEGACY '23



**The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ marked a historic milestone in Australia's sporting journey, and 2024 saw the legacy continue.**

When Football Australia submitted a bid to co-host the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, it made a commitment to transform the football landscape and create an inclusive ecosystem that allows everyone to engage, participate, compete and belong.

Launched in February 2021, *Legacy '23* is an ambitious five-pillar plan to ensure Football Australia delivers positive and enduring benefits for Australia's largest community sport, beyond 2023.





## Post-tournament Report

In February 2024, Football Australia launched a post-tournament report underscoring the significant impact of the **Legacy '23** strategy, which has brought about incremental yet transformative change within the sport over a short period. However, it also highlighted critical shortfalls, mainly the **\$2.9 billion gap in facility investment across Australia**.

Despite making foundational strides, the *Legacy '23* plan fell well short of its ambitious targets. With over 2,400 clubs operating at full capacity, Football Australia is committed to working with all levels of government, and other sporting codes, to address the \$2.9 billion gap in facility investment across Australia.



Football Australia welcomed the combined investment of \$398 million from the Australian and various state governments for *Legacy '23* and related initiatives. Of the \$398 million secured for *Legacy '23*, \$129 million (33%) of the total funds were allocated by government to positively impact other sports, primarily through substantial stadium upgrades nationwide. This highlights football's value to the broader sporting industry and establishes a new benchmark for future hosts of major sporting events in Australia.

To view the full report, click **HERE**.

## Australian economic and social impacts

**\$1.32 billion**

economic impact

**1,288,175**

total tickets sold for Australian matches

**\$324 million**

decreased healthcare costs

**35 matches**

across 5 host cities

**403,136**

in attendance across all seven sold-out CommBank Matildas matches

**86,654**

international visitors

**96%**

of overseas visitors will recommend visiting the host city to friends & family

**505,000**

volunteer hours during the tournament

Data source: FIFA and Australia Host City Impact Study, Nielsen, October 2023





**The story of the CommBank Matildas and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ is a testament to the power of sports in driving societal transformation.**

Beyond their on-field achievements, the CommBank Matildas, revered as Australia's most beloved National Team, have achieved more than sporting milestones. They've been catalysts for transformative societal change, challenging perceptions and gender stereotypes, while advocating for sustained evolution within the Australian and international sporting landscape.

Unveiled in the report was a detailed account of new research and insights developed by Football Australia in collaboration with Portas Consulting, capturing the wide-reaching social impact of the CommBank Matildas before, during and after the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™. The research expands upon the five pillars of *Legacy '23*, encompassing the CommBank Matildas' influence on broader social, health, sporting and economic impacts that transcend the realm of football, reaching individuals, communities and society at large.

**“ We wanted to leave a legacy and I really feel we've done it. ”**

STEPH CATLEY, COMMBANK MATILDA

**94%** of teachers and educators believe the CommBank Matildas are positive role models in their school.

**More than 1 in 3** male followers agree that the CommBank Matildas' success has led them to reconsider their attitudes or stereotypes towards women's roles in society; for example, in sports, in the workplace and at home.

**79%** of culturally and linguistically diverse community respondents agree that the CommBank Matildas and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ emphasised the importance of diversity and inclusion.

**90%** of registered participants want to support the growth of women's football in their local club environment.

**92%** of respondents felt safe and welcome at matches.

**93%** of respondents agree that the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ enhanced community spirit, pride and enjoyment.





## Women's Football Summit

The inaugural Women's Football Summit, a significant milestone for the future of women's football in Australia, was hosted by Football Australia in collaboration with the Women's Football Council, demonstrating leadership and commitment to enhancing the ongoing progress of women's football. The summit, held before the thrilling CommBank Matildas victory against China PR, was not just a celebration but a call to action, uniting over 130 key stakeholders from across the football community.

Collaboration was emphasised throughout the summit, focusing on aligning and advancing priorities around commercial investment, community football, facilities, media and visibility, and government relations. Attendees engaged in workshops and heard insights from guest speakers including endurance athlete and motivational speaker Samantha Gash, Office for Women in Sport and Recreation Victoria Director Sarah Styles, and newly appointed Australian Sports Commission Chair Kate Jenkins AO. The sessions were dedicated to deliberating strategies to transform the vision of women's football in Australia into actionable steps.

The Women's Football Council and Football Australia will use the outputs of the summit to drive the direction over the next three years, working collectively to effectively leverage the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™. The vision is for women's football to be an unstoppable force in women's sport, and that it drives societal transformation.

**“ This was a key step forward in unifying to drive the future of women's football, building on the momentum of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, and setting the stage for continued growth and success. ”**

DR DEIDRE ANDERSON AM, CHAIR OF THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL COUNCIL

**“ The top football nations around the world, they consider themselves as an ecosystem. There are different parts of the game, but if they are working properly and collaboratively, they can feed off each other. ”**





## OUR GAME

OUR GAME is an initiative launched by Football Australia in December 2021 to harness the power of football in building an inclusive and diverse environment for women and girls. The mission of OUR GAME is to elevate, inform and unleash a passionate community that drives the future of women's football. It aims to increase awareness and visibility of women and girls in football, facilitate access to participation opportunities, and transform how they perceive their involvement in the game.

Through OUR GAME, we aim to harness the power of football to build an inclusive and diverse game that embraces, positively influences, celebrates and elevates women and girls, to own and drive the future of women's football.

*Football Australia acknowledges the considerable support of the Australian Government through the Australian Sports Commission in supporting the Legacy '23 plan and its initiatives. We also extend our thanks to our commercial partners, LEGO® and Commonwealth Bank, for their continued support.*



## KEY INITIATIVES THROUGH 2024

### LEGO® x OUR GAME

- Across October and November, Football Australia and LEGO® revealed the latest OUR GAME content series in their continuing mission to encourage girls to Play Unstoppable. Launched to celebrate International Day of the Girl and speaking to its theme of 'girls' vision for the future', the five-part **Talia takes on...** Play Unstoppable Mentorship series builds on the LEGO® Group's Play Unstoppable campaign and explores the limitless possibilities for girls when they can play without boundaries. Each episode documents CommBank Matilda Talia Younis' interactions with and mentorship from women in football across diverse areas, including administration, medical, media, coaching and refereeing. To check out the full series, click **HERE**.

### Female Football Week

- Female Football Week is an annual initiative aimed at elevating women and girls and their contribution to football across all aspects of the game. The campaign took place from 3 to 12 May 2024. The 2024 theme #WeRise is a celebration of Australian women's football, as we rise together to elevate women and girls in football, highlighting the sense of community in women's football, both on and off the field. The week included over 250 community events nationally, over 300 registrations for national webinars and over 500 club packs filled with giveaways to support grassroots activities.

### Women in Leadership Program

- Launched in 2023, the Women in Leadership Program, designed in collaboration with international football leader and APL Board Director Ebru Köksal, is an intensive course aimed at women currently working in or aspiring to work in football. There were six programs delivered in 2024 and two 'all in' conferences. To date this program has now been completed by over 280 women nationally.

### Referee Meet and Greet

- This initiative invites five local up-and-coming female referees to attend a CommBank Matildas match, providing them with a unique opportunity to meet selected FIFA Match Officials. The experience includes a tour of the field of play and change rooms, as well as a 15-minute Q&A session with the officials. During the Q&A, the referees are encouraged to ask questions about the elite referee pathway, such as how to manage pressure, what their training involves, and the steps to take to further their careers in refereeing. Over the course of two years, we have engaged 45 local female referees across five states for the Referee Meet and Greet.





# TECHNICAL REPORT



## TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

Football Australia continues to play a pivotal role in the identification and development of elite players, from the youth ranks to the senior National Teams, the CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos. The importance of this role is underlined by FIFA’s recommendation that Football Australia should spearhead a comprehensive, long-term development program, with the aim of establishing a High Performance Elite Players’ Pathway System for both male and female players.

This system must be supported by a world-class Coach Education program, which will ensure a consistent standard of development at every level of the game. An important element for the Technical Department has been the creation of a long-term strategy that aligns with international standards. There has been a strong emphasis on planning the technical strategy with the key factor being a player-centric focus.

### Principles and Strategic Goals

The Technical Department operates under a set of guiding principles aimed at elevating Australian football. These principles focus on three key areas: increasing the volume of football played, particularly among youth players; establishing world-class environments for

coach development; and positioning Australia as a leader in women’s football within the Asia-Pacific region. These strategic aims were central to the department’s efforts throughout 2024.

**“ The ultimate goal is to ensure that players are given the tools, environment and opportunities they need to excel in both domestic and international competitions, culminating in Australia’s preparations for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. ”**

### Achievements in 2024

Over the course of 2024, Football Australia’s Technical Department has made significant progress in various areas of player and coach development. One of the most important achievements has been addressing a backlog of 3,000 coaches who had not been assessed or had failed to complete their courses. This has allowed the

department to maintain a consistent standard of Coach Education and ensure that a higher number of coaches are accredited to deliver quality training to players at all levels.

The department also attained AFC Level 3 Youth Development accreditation, the highest possible within the Asian Football Confederation, which further solidified its commitment to world-class coaching standards. Additionally, it saw unprecedented demand for its coaching courses, with over 200 applications for A Diplomas – the largest response ever for Football Australia – and a total of 30 workshops held throughout the year. These workshops rapidly grew in attendance, from 80 to over 250 registrations, showing a marked increase in the interest and engagement from coaches across Australia.

### LMS/QMS Digital Platform

The Technical Department implemented migration and integration of a new Learning Management System (LMS), which will also serve as a Qualification Management System (QMS) to revolutionise Coach Education. In terms of coach development, Football Australia’s Technical Department successfully commenced the seventh Pro Diploma course in Australia and multiple Goalkeeping A and B Diplomas, further strengthening the pool of elite coaches in the country. The streamlining of courses delivered by the digital





system allows coaches to access courses online and track their progress through the system. The work is ongoing and needs further input from staff regarding learning modules, but has already made an enormous difference in coach development and registration procedures, and provides simple access for all stakeholders.

Another significant accomplishment has been the development of new junior playing formats, which has ensured they are in line with age-appropriate best practice. This work is critical in providing young players with the right environment to develop their skills in a way that aligns with their cognitive, emotional and physical development.

### FIFA TDS Program

Having successfully attained financial support for the FIFA Talent Development Scheme (TDS), the Technical Department set out to create an extensive and innovative Talent Identification (TID) program using an app that was created in-house. Covering the whole country, the app allows large numbers of Football Australia/AFC-qualified coaches to identify talented players. In 2024, 35 TDS events were run across the country with over 1,000 players involved in the matches. Over 500 coaches attended the workshops and used the TID app to generate over 3,000 reports on players. The program was such a success that three Football Australia staff were invited to showcase the Football Australia version of the TDS program to Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (Concacaf) Member Associations in Toronto, Canada. Following the success of this workshop, Football Australia was applauded by FIFA and a further TDS seminar was arranged in Brisbane with 12 Asian countries, two Concacaf nations and New Zealand, from the Oceania Football Confederation, invited to participate.

### Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

A key component of the Technical Department’s success has been its strong relationships with stakeholders across the football community.

In 2024, technical staff attended coaching conferences with Football Victoria, Football New South Wales, Football West, and Northern New South Wales Football, where they delivered presentations to over 800 coaches on modern coaching principles and contemporary football practices. Its ongoing collaboration with state-based institutes and education departments is a crucial step in creating a holistic development pathway for both players and coaches.

### Strategic Plan for 2032 Brisbane Olympics

Looking ahead, the Technical Department has laid the groundwork for a long-term strategy aimed at success in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. This strategy involves a carefully structured 10-year plan that will guide the development of Australia’s next generation of elite football players. The first phase of this strategy is focused on establishing a clear team brand and identity, emphasising possession-based, high-intensity attacking football. Over the next few years, the focus will build towards establishing a strong foundation in decision-making, technical skills and teamwork, with particular attention paid to player metrics such as successful passes, possession percentages and shots on goal.

### Football Australia Academy Pilot Rollout

The Technical Department has collaborated throughout 2024 with all Member Federations to discuss the Football Australia Academy and the department’s participation in the pilot program. These discussions led to a determination that initially four Member Federations were selected for developing the Academy, where preparations started in late 2024 to formally commence the pilot in early 2025.

The four Member Federations identified to develop the three-tier model were Football South Australia, Football Victoria, Football Tasmania and Football West.

Co-branding of the Football Australia/Member Federation Academies and finalised Football Australia Academy information brochure was completed towards the end of 2024 and distributed to Member Federations involved in the program.



TDS Launch Event, Home of the Matildas, Victoria, 20 Feb 2024



TDS Launch Event, Home of the Matildas, Victoria, 20 Feb 2024



The Academy pilot has also been released publicly through a media announcement and has received positive feedback from many quarters.

### National Youth Championships

The annual National Youth Championships program invited more Member Federation teams to participate in the tournament than ever; Football Australia is keen to grow the event into a major annual calendar competition and conference moving forward, with coaching presentations, parent workshops, player identification, and biometric testing and monitoring.

### Coach Education and Curriculum Reform

A key element of the Technical Department’s strategy is the continued evolution of the Coach Education system. The future delivery of coaching qualifications will be based on a multilevel approach, with progressive steps of certification at various stages of a coach’s journey. This approach will involve a combination of in-person and online, reflective components, allowing for a flexible and comprehensive learning experience.

The Technical Department has drawn on international examples, particularly from Belgium and Germany, to refine its coaching methodology. This research has emphasised the importance of player-centric, age-appropriate learning environments and small-sided games, which are critical to developing a strong technical foundation in young players. In addition, the new LMS will play a crucial role in facilitating the delivery of these courses, enabling coaches to track their progress and gain access to a variety of learning resources.

### Player Pathways and Match Minutes

Another aim has been increasing competitive match minutes for youth players. The importance of providing young players with ample opportunities to play in challenging, competitive

environments cannot be overstated. To this end, the department is working to ensure that U-23 and U-20 players are more consistently included in A-Leagues’ matchday squads, with similar initiatives being implemented in the National Second Tier and National Premier Leagues.

Football Australia is also refining its junior playing formats by using the latest research on player development, including studies on the technical impact of small-sided games. These findings are being integrated into the new junior development framework, which aims to provide players with the best possible conditions to develop their skills and progress along the player pathway.

### Conclusion

In 2024, Football Australia’s Technical Department made significant strides in improving Coach Education, player development and strategic planning for the future. While there is still much work to be done, the foundation has been laid for Australia to produce world-class players and coaches in the years ahead. The focus on long-term planning, innovation and collaboration with key stakeholders will ensure that Australian football is positioned for success at the highest levels. With continued investment and commitment to development, Football Australia is on track to achieve its vision of a thriving footballing nation that consistently produces world-class talent.

**“ The department remains steadfast in its mission: better coaches, better players. ”**





# COACH EDUCATION

## Coaching Courses Rollout

After aligning the coaching courses in 2023, from Foundation of Football to the A Diploma with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Coaching Conventions, 2024 marked the rollout of these updated courses nationwide. Alignment represents a significant advancement in ensuring that the courses conducted in each Member Federation are consistent in both the content presented and the educational approach taken. Regular meetings between Football Australia's Coach Education team and Member Federation Coach Education departments and Technical Directors have fostered a collaborative environment in promoting consistent communication and a unified direction for the development of coaches across the country.

## Football Australia Learning Centre

The Football Australia Learning Centre was launched days before the start of 2024 and is now Football Australia's LMS and QMS for all coaches in Australia. The Football Australia Learning Centre has been populated with many online learning modules and reality-based tasks for each course, enabling delivery in a more accessible, learner-centred fashion. Courses now involve a mixture of online, face-to-face and reality-based learning. The Football Australia Learning Centre enables coaches to learn in their own time at their own pace, and arrive at the course confident and ready to apply what they have already learned in an engaging, practical, learner-centred environment.

## Delivery of Coaching Courses and Coach Education Workshops

During 2024, the Member Federations collectively conducted approximately 550 Football Australia coaching courses, including

Coles MiniRoos, Foundation of Football, and B and C Diplomas. In addition to these, Football Australia Coach Education staff facilitated three A Diploma courses in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, as well as bespoke courses including female-only Growing Football Fund courses.

## Pro Diploma

The year 2024 saw the completion of one Pro Diploma cohort and the commencement of another. The Pro Diploma contained a series of face-to-face blocks linked to National Team activity, including the CommBank Matildas' match against Uzbekistan and the Subway Socceroos' match against Lebanon.

**“ Football Australia tutors conducted individual club visits, and each candidate undertook a three-day visit to a chosen high-performance environment; these opportunities ensured that concepts covered were aligned with reality-based learning experiences. ”**

A key addition to the course was a 'crossover week' in May, when the graduating cohort shared learnings with the new group in their first block with the objective of developing contacts, networking and creating a community of practice with a view to establishing an active alumni. UEFA Pro Licence tutor and instructor Dany Ryser once again attended the course to share modules from the UEFA Pro Licence and provide feedback for improvement on the course's evolution, assisting with Football Australia's intention to seek greater recognition of the Pro Diploma globally.





## National Youth Championships

Members of the Technical Department used the opportunity to run Coach Education workshops at both the Boys and Girls 2024 National Youth Championships, in Wollongong in New South Wales and Bundoora in Victoria, respectively. These workshops were open to all coaches involved in the events, as well as external coaches that wished to register and gain valuable insights. The sessions provided a platform to share key information and technical expertise aimed at enhancing coaching practices to those working or volunteering in the youth space.

## FIFA Coach Educators Program

August 2024 saw the much-anticipated delivery of the FIFA Coach Educators Program. FIFA and Football Australia Coach Education staff were joined by Member Federation Coach Education Managers and Technical Directors along with identified Coach Education tutors from around the country. The five-day in-person component of the program, held in Melbourne, Victoria, was conducted by both Football Australia and FIFA staff, and facilitated collaboration between all parties as to how Coach Education tutors can be developed and supported going forward. Powerful insights were gained given that, during 2024, Football Australia assessed, approved and inducted 180 Coach Education tutors across the Member Federations.





# REFEREES DEPARTMENT REPORT

Throughout 2024, the Referees Department has been working on four strategy pillars:

- 1. RESTRUCTURE OF THE REFEREES DEPARTMENT AND PANELS TO SERVE THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETITION (A-LEAGUE MEN AND A-LEAGUE WOMEN)
- 2. DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE (VAR) AND A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE
- 3. COACHING AND REFEREE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING PATHWAYS
- 4. CREATION OF OBSERVER AND KEY MATCH INCIDENT PANELS TO REVIEW REFEREE PERFORMANCE.

## Restructure

The Referees Department underwent significant changes during 2024, with several members of staff leaving Football Australia for new challenges.

The department has a new Head of Referees, former Premier League referee Jon Moss, who has implemented significant

changes, including a New Operations Lead, the appointment of a General Manager – Elite Refereeing, VAR Project Manager, and Elite Referee VAR Coach.

Alongside this process of internal restructuring, the department has begun to finalise Referee Panels to serve the professional game, with the introduction of a National Second Tier (NST) in 2025.

The Referee Panels will be reduced for the A-League competitions, with the NST being used as a development pathway for emerging match officials. The Football Australia Referee Academy (FARA) program will move into the elite area of the department and will continue to serve as a refereeing pathway to the professional game.

Further refereeing pathways are being established through the National Premier Leagues’ competitions, professional game and talent identification program. In essence, Football Australia plans to create multiple pathways for all referees, to support development and growth.

## Video Assistant Referee

Football Australia has continued to develop the use of VAR in the professional game. The introduction of a Professional Game Manager and a VAR Coach has allowed the team to develop a strategic vision for the future development of Video Match Officials (VMO).

An extensive training program has been established to enhance the pool of VMOs available on a weekly basis. Weekly targeted training within this field is now available to all match officials.

As of 31 December 2024, the use of VAR in the A-League Men competition shows that 99.27% of VAR decisions during the current season have been deemed correct, with only 4% of decisions requiring intervention.

Undoubtedly the use of VAR has added value to the on-field decision-making of referees. Furthermore, Australian referees have been at the forefront of the use of in-stadium announcements to help develop synergy with fans and stakeholders.







## Development & Coaching

The development opportunities and coaching sessions available to Football Australia's match officials are essential. Over the last 12 months, the community team with the Referees Department has produced a number of Learning Management System (LMS) modules around the skills needed for both junior and senior match officials. The modules have been used extensively in partnership with Member Federations.

The Referees Department has delivered a variety of workshops to help launch and develop conference meetings for referees. These will ensure that throughout Australia, a referee's DNA is nurtured and moulded by observing how match officials communicate, control, manage and move during games, and as a result, will ensure consistency and efficiency throughout our officiating.

In the professional space, match officials have also been given access to weekly coaching sessions to support this consistency and learning throughout the year. The information is stored and disseminated further down the refereeing pyramid, through the established pathways.

## Observing & Measuring

How Football Australia observes match officials and measures performance is developing: from the coaching conversations in the professional game, to the in-stadium observations and reports at grassroots level.

The Referees Department is developing an observation scheme to ensure consistency when measuring refereeing performance. The intent is to roll out a comprehensive assessment scheme in 2025.

As Football Australia establishes an observer panel to measure elite performance, the organisation is also moving to develop an independent panel of football experts to measure key match incidents, in order to align the refereeing team with what football expects.

## Progression within Football Australia

Football Australia has pioneered the progression of in-stadium announcements and the development and selection of an all-female team of officials to officiate an A-League Men fixture.

Australian match officials have been selected for over 50 international matches, with many being involved in the knockout stages of AFC and FIFA competitions, demonstrating their value on the world stage.



# GOVERNMENT REPORT



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY

### Enhancing Football Australia's Government Relations and Advocacy

Football in Australia operates in a highly competitive, multi-sport environment where funding is limited, regulations are constantly evolving, and community expectations are shifting.

The dynamic and unpredictable nature of politics and government demands a high level of expertise, research, agility and strategic advocacy to keep up with and adapt to change.

### Strengthening Football's Government Relations

In 2024, Football Australia adopted a more sophisticated approach to government relations by establishing the role of General Manager of Government Relations.

As part of this approach, Football Australia introduced a comprehensive government relations strategy, providing a blueprint for future operations, advocacy methodology, and strategic objectives. This strategy included a situational review of Football Australia's current standing and engagement practices.

With this strategy, Football Australia has realigned its government relations efforts so as to effectively advocate for its renewed purpose and ambitions to government and key stakeholders.

### Key Areas of Change

The strategy identified several critical areas for improvement:

- **Unifying football's advocacy efforts** across the ecosystem because governments require football to speak with a single voice through Football Australia.
- **Fostering a positive internal culture** that collaboratively sets a clear football agenda with Member Federations and the Australian Professional Leagues (APL).
- **Enhancing communication with government** through improved methodology and messaging.
- **Maintaining a strict bipartisan approach** to advocacy.
- **Building government literacy** within the football ecosystem.
- **Investing additional resources** into government relations.
- **Enhancing the quality and rigour** of proposals through thorough stakeholder consultation.
- **Adopting a proactive stance** on public affairs issues.
- **Strengthening presence and responsiveness** at all levels of government.

Football Australia's advocacy is guided by two strategic pillars:

1. focusing on football domestically
2. engaging with football globally – our 'local, but global' philosophy.

### Priorities and Objectives

In early 2024, Football Australia established a Member Federation Government Relations Committee, which has since expanded to include the APL for a more unified and collaborative approach. This committee ensures open communication, coordination and alignment on government activities and advocacy.

Football Australia continues to work to align short-, medium-, and long-term objectives and strategies:

- **Short-term:** Addressing immediate challenges:
  - » Shaping a unified advocacy culture, enhancing reputation and improving coordination within the football community.
- **Medium-term:** Building capability and trust:
  - » Strengthening football's identity and value proposition to government.
  - » Demonstrating the sport's economic and social value, to secure greater investment.
- **Long-term:** Securing football's financial future:
  - » Aligning policy and advocacy efforts with Football Australia's corporate plan and government priorities.
  - » Ensuring sustained investment in grassroots infrastructure, National Teams and global tournaments.





## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

### AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ Funding

Football Australia secured \$15 million in federal funding for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ campaign through the 2024–25 Federal Budget. This significant announcement was the result of concerted engagement with the government in the early months of 2024. The investment package ensures Football Australia will continue Australia's tradition of hosting world-class football tournaments and major events.

### Parliamentary Friends of Football

Senator Nita Green and Bert van Manen MP, serve as Co-Chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Football, a Parliamentary Friendship Group that provides a non-partisan forum for MPs and Senators to promote the economic and social benefits of football.

To support our funding campaign for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™, Football Australia organised a Parliamentary Friends of Football event in March 2024 at Federal Parliament, featuring the CommBank Matildas and Young Matildas. Over 30 Members of federal government attended to show their support for Football Australia, the CommBank Matildas, and CommBank Young Matildas.

### Graham Arnold Coaching Politicians

Another key event took place at Parliament House in Canberra, where Graham Arnold, alongside Subway Socceroos Craig Goodwin, Josh Nisbet and Joel King, participated in a football game on the Senate Oval, organised by the Parliamentary Friends of Football Group.

Over 40 politicians and staff were in attendance as the Subway Socceroos' former Head Coach put politicians and staff through a thorough training session. Graham Arnold addressed the group, outlining the need for additional investment in our National Teams.

## MOBILISING LOCAL CLUBS

### Play Our Way Grant Program

Inspired by the success of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, the Australian Government opened applications for the \$200 million Play Our Way grant program to be run over three years. The program provides funding to improve infrastructure and programs to address barriers to female participation in sport.

Led by General Manager of World Cup Legacy Programs, Carlee Millikin, Football Australia provided guidelines and resources to help local clubs and Member Federations maximise funding opportunities across both streams of the program.

### Local Government Elections Campaign

During the 2024 NSW local government elections, Football Australia led a campaign with Football NSW and Football Northern NSW to highlight the need to upgrade football facilities at local clubs. The campaign was designed to activate local clubs and districts to maximise opportunities for funding in the lead-up to the elections. Football Australia designed a campaign toolkit for clubs, which included social media assets and pledge cards. The toolkit was also made available to Football Victoria, which ran its own successful targeted campaign during the Victorian local government elections.

### A Comprehensive Election Platform

Football Australia has begun consultations with Member Federations and the APL to develop a unified election platform that presents a clear, cohesive agenda for the sport's future. Consultations commenced in early April 2024 to identify common themes and priorities, with a core focus on closing the grassroots facilities gap. The election platform will form a baseline framework for our long-term advocacy to all levels of government, driving additional detailed and specific policy proposals and advocacy.

### Moving Forward

Football Australia's strengthened government relations strategy has laid the foundation for sustained advocacy success across the entire football ecosystem. By unifying our voice, refining our approach, and proactively engaging with government, we are positioning football for long-term growth, investment and success at both the grassroots and elite levels.



# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**Through partnerships providing valuable international match activity for a range of Australian National Teams, impactful sports diplomacy projects in Asia, Oceania and Africa, and a successful bid to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™, Football Australia's International Relations Department celebrated a wide range of achievements in 2024.**

Beyond the day-to-day management of the organisation's international affairs and relationships with international stakeholders, the department retained a strong focus on the wider objectives of connecting Australia to the world through football and supporting the development of football in the Asia-Pacific region, with projects that simultaneously add value to the Australian game.

In 2024, this focus included a significant increase in the scale and regularity of initiatives delivered under its relationship with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The partnership between Football Australia and DFAT was at its most visible in August, when an expanded partnership through the Australian Government's PacificAus Sports program was announced prior to a match between the Solomon Islands U-19 Men's national team and the Subway Joeys, played in front of a capacity 11,000-strong crowd at the National Stadium in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The occasion, marked by the attendance and opening remarks of Solomon Islands' Prime Minister, Jeremiah Manele, outlined a wide-ranging four-year agreement, the impact of which was quickly evident in a range of international football fixtures and capacity-building opportunities designed to benefit participants from Australia and the Pacific alike.

The Subway Joeys' tour saw Brad Maloney's young charges play two memorable and high-profile matches against Solomon Islands in Honiara, followed by a meeting with the Vanuatu U-19 side in Port Vila, marking the first time that a men's national football team from Australia had visited either nation since its move to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in 2006.

That groundbreaking tour followed another held earlier in the year by Australia's Futsalroos, who visited Honiara in February for what were the first-ever international futsal matches held in Solomon Islands, with the three-match series providing Miles Downie's Australian side with crucial preparation for the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand 2024™.

More history was made in September when Australia's U-23 Men's National Team visited Port Vila for a two-match international series against the Vanuatu national team, marking the first time a senior men's national outfit had participated in a Football Australia/PacificAus Sports project.

The Australian side, led by Tony Vidmar, and boasting a squad filled with A-League Men regulars, provided the Vanuatu side with the best possible preparation for the Oceania Football Confederation's FIFA World Cup 2026™ Qualifiers, which began a month later, highlighting the mutual footballing benefits the program offered.

In addition to that on-field impact, all three visiting Australian teams conducted engagements with local footballers, schools or communities, while Football Australia held capacity-building sessions with referees in the Solomon Islands, as well as a first-of-its-kind Shadowing Program, with participants from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu contributing to the staging of two CommBank Matildas' friendlies against Brazil in November, underscoring Australian football's capacity to lead on the international stage.

While the region played host to significant achievements, Football Australia's partnership with DFAT wasn't limited to the Pacific; with a range of initiatives delivered in Asia, and beyond, over the course of the year.

In February, a partnership with the Australian Embassy in Moscow, which also oversees Australia's diplomatic interests in Central Asia, saw a delegation featuring former Matilda and current football broadcaster, Grace Gill, travel to Tashkent for a three-day program including a women's football development workshop with the Uzbekistan Football Association and community visits, specifically designed to coincide with the Paris 2024™ Olympic Games Qualifier held between Uzbekistan and the CommBank Matildas.







In April, CommBank Young Matildas Head Coach, Leah Blayney, and former Young Matilda and current Europe-based professional Emma Ilijoski travelled to Rabat and Casablanca for a series of events organised in partnership with the Australian Embassy in Morocco. The Australian Embassy in Jakarta welcomed a Football Australia delegation featuring Joshua Kennedy and former Matilda Gema Simon, which allowed the Australian Government to maximise the positive impact of the Qualifier between Indonesia and the Subway Socceroos in September.

Each of these projects also provided a platform for discussions with the relevant national football federation, building stronger ties with a focus on future partnerships and collaboration.

On home soil, Football Australia's ongoing partnership with DFAT's National Foundation for Australia-China Relations took centre-stage at Accor Stadium in June, when the CommBank Matildas' sold-out international friendly against China served as the platform for a diplomacy-focused pre-match VIP function hosting key government figures and Chinese-Australian community members.

The impact of Football Australia's increasingly regular partnerships with DFAT was recognised when it became a member of the Australian Government's newly established Sports Diplomacy Consultative Group. Football Australia attended the group's inaugural meeting in Melbourne in November, paving the way for football to continue to play a significant role in advancing Australia's objectives on the world stage.

In the immediate future, no single event provides the nation with a clearer opportunity to engage the Asia-Pacific region than AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™.

Confirmation from the AFC Executive Committee in May that Australia's bid had been successful was the culmination of a two-year project for Football Australia's International Relations team, which contributed to bid strategy, tournament modelling, creation and submission of bid documents, and assumed responsibility for a range of interactions with the AFC, such as official venue inspections.

Hosting the 2026 tournament provides a new set of opportunities for Australian football to harness the power and potential of the game in our region, and its capacity to meaningfully connect the nation to the world through our shared passion of football.



# LEGAL REPORT



## DISCIPLINARY & JUDICIAL BODIES / FOOTBALL GOVERNANCE

Through the disciplinary and judicial bodies of Football Australia and as governed by the applicable statutes, by-laws and regulations, the Football Governance Team governs the disciplinary and judicial process for the game as a whole, and for specific competitions, being Hahn Australia Cup (from the Round of 32), the Isuzu UTE A-League Men and Liberty A-League Women.

Those bodies are responsible for determining a variety of disputes within football in Australia, including: disciplinary penalties for on- and off-field misconduct of players, team officials and clubs; disputes relating to determinations under the National Code of Conduct and Ethics; contractual disputes between players and clubs, or players and Football Australia; and disputes between football participants that do not fit within the Member Federations' grievance procedures.

The 2023/24 Isuzu UTE A-League Men season saw a total of 46 Red Cards and 12 Yellow Card accumulation suspensions. Additionally, the Liberty A-League Women had nine Red Cards and five Yellow Card accumulation suspensions.

From the Round of 32, once Football Australia took carriage of the Australia Cup, five Red Cards were issued. The Match Review Panel reviewed 37 matters consisting of Isuzu UTE A-League Men and Liberty A-League Women Red Cards and citation incidents.

Football Australia issued six spectator banning notices:

- four spectators at Liberty A-League Women matches
- two spectators at Isuzu UTE A-League Men matches
- no spectators were issued with notices at the Australia Cup.

The Disciplinary and Judicial Bodies convened throughout the year to hear 18 matters, comprising:

Disciplinary/Judicial Body	No. of matters
Disciplinary and Ethics Committee	Nine hearings
Appeal Committee	One hearing
National Dispute Resolution Chamber	Eight determinations





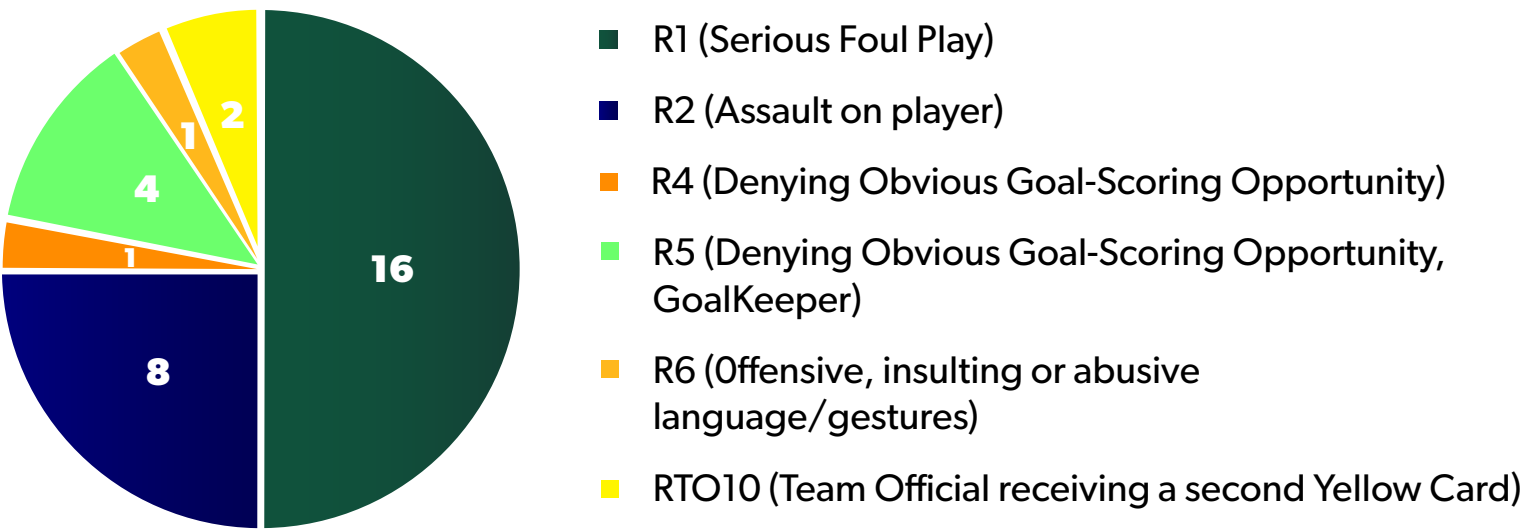
On-field disciplinary statistics

The on-field disciplinary statistics represent a comprehensive insight into the variations of Red Cards and Yellow Cards issued to players or team officials from when they enter the field of play until they leave the field of play after an A-League match ends. These statistics also cover any suspensions that have been enforced because of a player or team official receiving a Red Card or accumulating Yellow Cards.

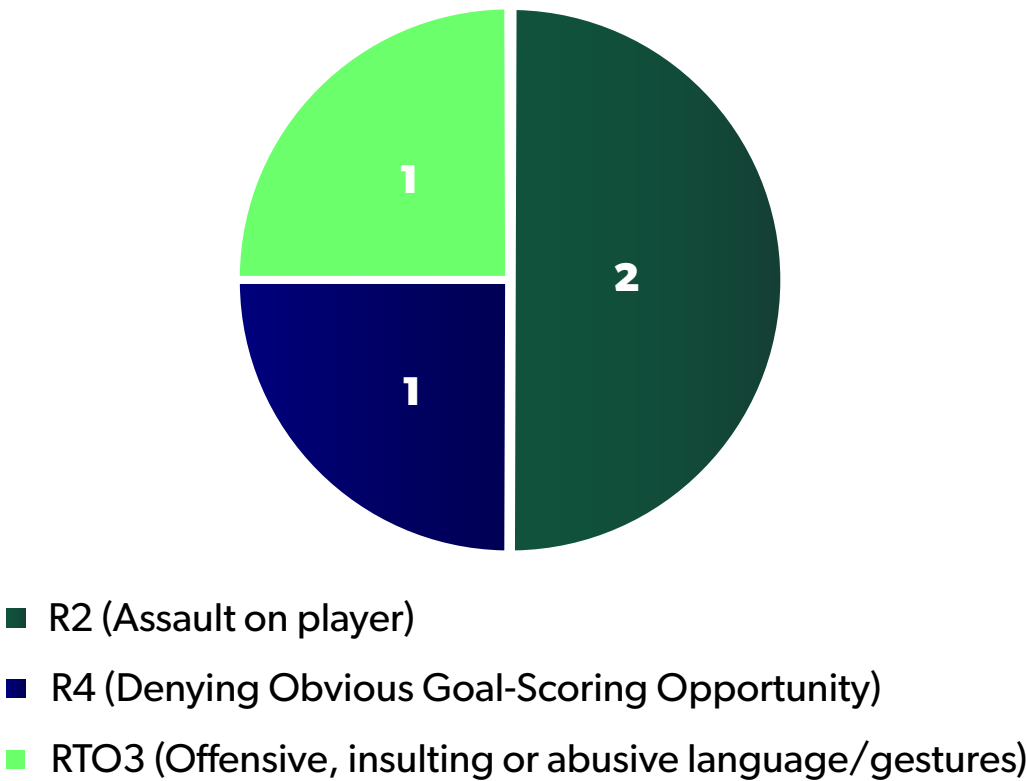
1. Red Card offences by code

Red Cards are classified by codes based on the type of offence committed. The codes are further explained in clause 6.2 on page 9 of the *A-Leagues Disciplinary Regulations* (the Regulations) and clause 35.1 on page 71 of the *Australia Cup Regulations*.

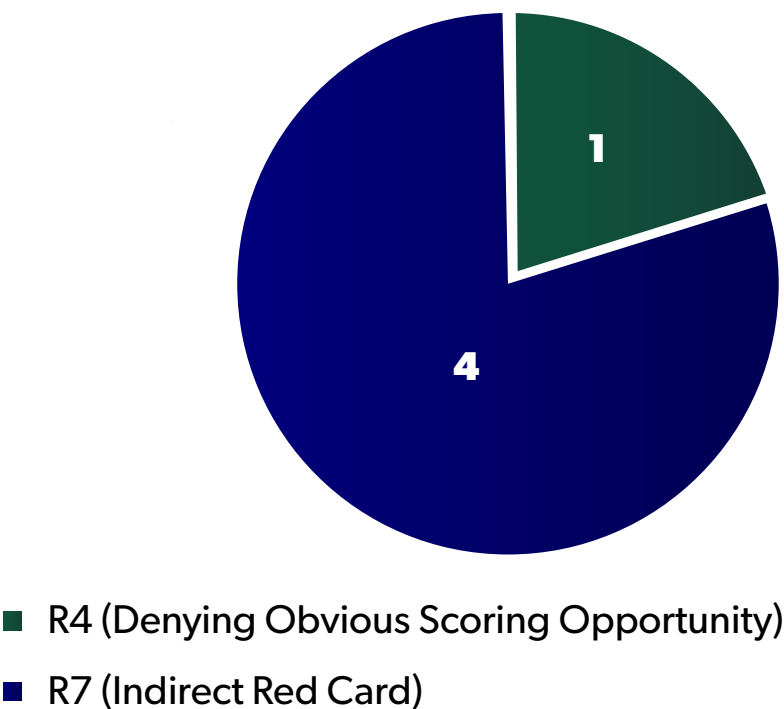
Isuzu UTE A-League Men Direct Red Card Offences by Code



Liberty A-League Women Direct Red Card Offences by Code



Australia Cup Red Card Offences by category



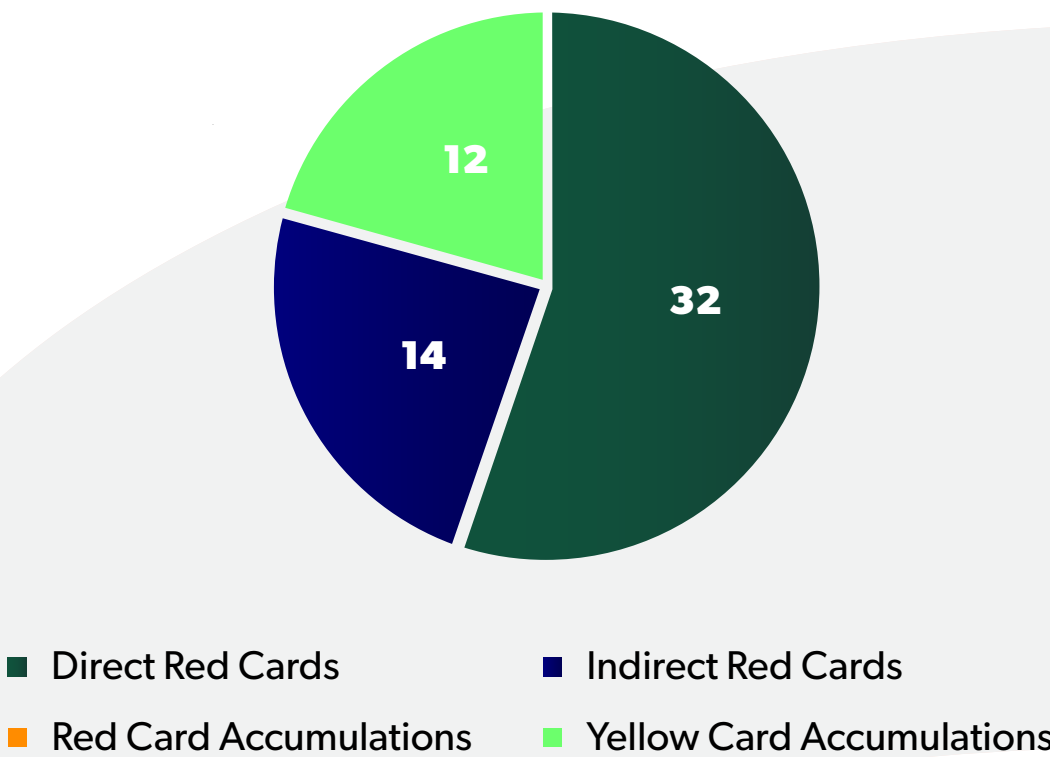
\*Note: Football Australia only deals with disciplinary matters at the Australia Cup from the Round of 32.

2. Suspensions by category of card

Players and team officials are eligible to receive suspensions from:

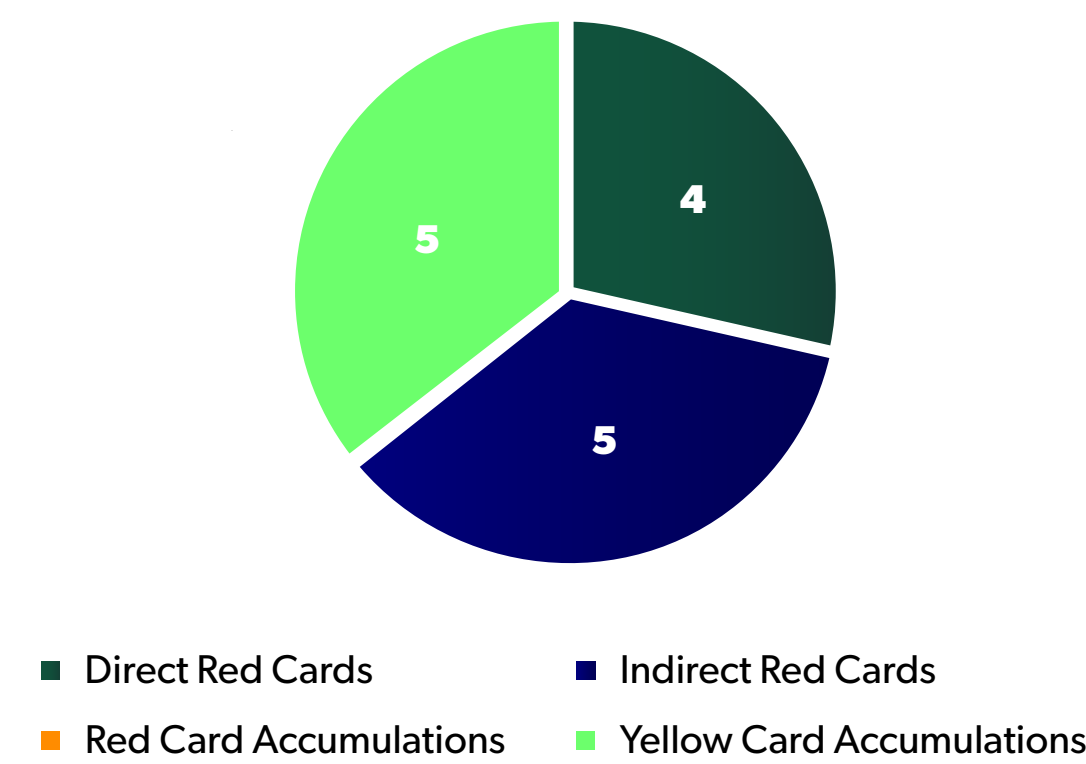
- a. a direct Red Card = when a player or team official commits a serious offence, they must leave the field immediately and not return for the remainder of the game.
- b. an indirect Red Card = when a player receives two Yellow Cards in the same match, they will be issued a Red Card, so they must leave the field immediately and not return for the remainder of the game.
- c. Red Card accumulation = each Red Card received requires the recipient to serve a one-match suspension, known as a Mandatory Match Suspension. If a player or team official accumulates multiple Red Cards throughout the season, their Mandatory Match Suspension increases pursuant to clauses 6.5 and 8.5 of the Regulations.
- d. Yellow Card accumulation = if a player or team official accumulates multiple Yellow Cards throughout the season, they will receive a one-match suspension.

Isuzu UTE A-League Men Suspensions

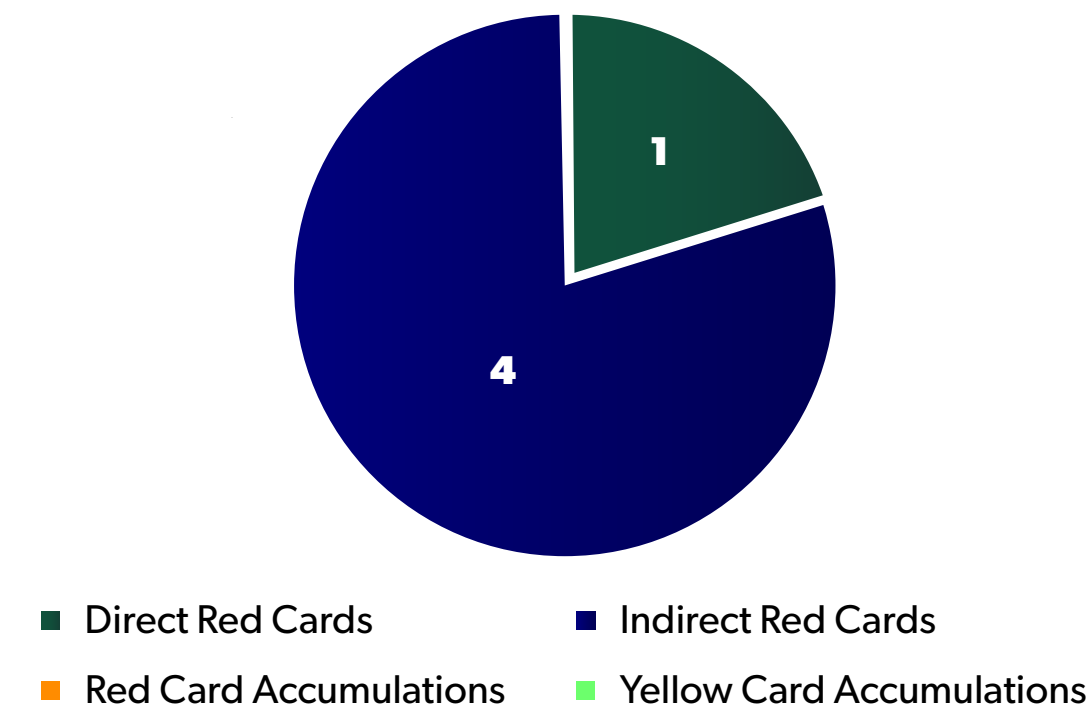




Liberty A-League Women Suspensions



Australia Cup Suspensions



3. Miscellaneous statistics

Red/Yellow Cards and Team Misconduct

In addition to an individual player or team official receiving a Red Card or Yellow Card, a club can be disciplined should it have participated in what is called Team Misconduct, in which: five players or team officials are cautioned (receive a Yellow Card) or sent off (receive a Red Card) during an A-League match

- a. three players or team officials are sent off during an A-League match
- b. players or team officials collectively show dissent towards a match official or collectively seek to intimidate, threaten or exert pressure on a match official to make or alter a decision
- c. players or team officials engage in a melee or brawl.

Football Australia will issue a suspended \$500 fine to a club should it be guilty of Team Misconduct from (a) – (c) above, which will be payable should another Team Misconduct offence occur. A \$500 fine will be issued at first instance should a club be guilty of committing a Team Misconduct as defined by (d) above.

Penalties imposed for Red/Yellow Cards and Team Misconduct in the 2023/24 season

	Direct Red Card	Indirect Red Card	Red Card Accumulation	Yellow Card Accumulation	Team Misconduct
Isuzu UTE A-League Men	15 x 1-Match Suspension 8 x 2-Match suspension 4 x 3-Match Suspension	12RC x 1-Match Suspension		13 x 1-Match Suspension	14 x Suspended fine (of \$500) 12 x \$500 fine payable by clubs
Liberty A-League Women	4 x 1-Match Suspension	5 x 1-Match Suspension		3 x 1-Match Suspension	3 x Suspended fine 1 x \$500 fine payable by costs
Australia Cup	1 x 1-Match Suspension	4 x 1-Match Suspension			





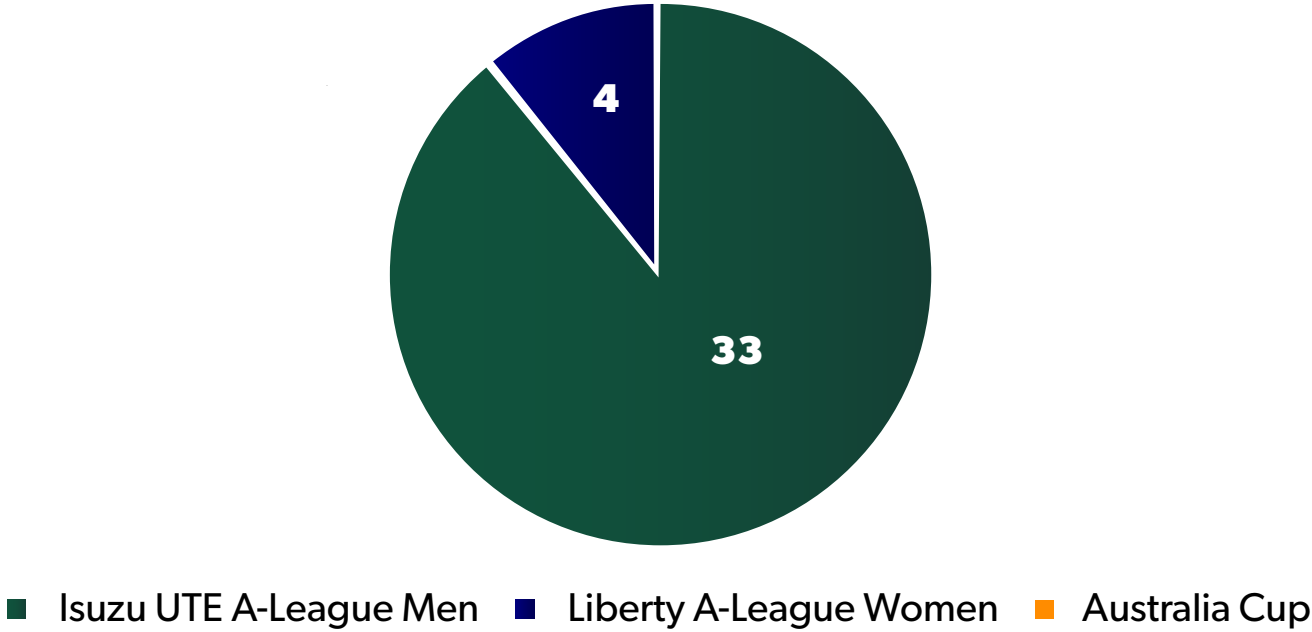


#### 4. Match Review Panel

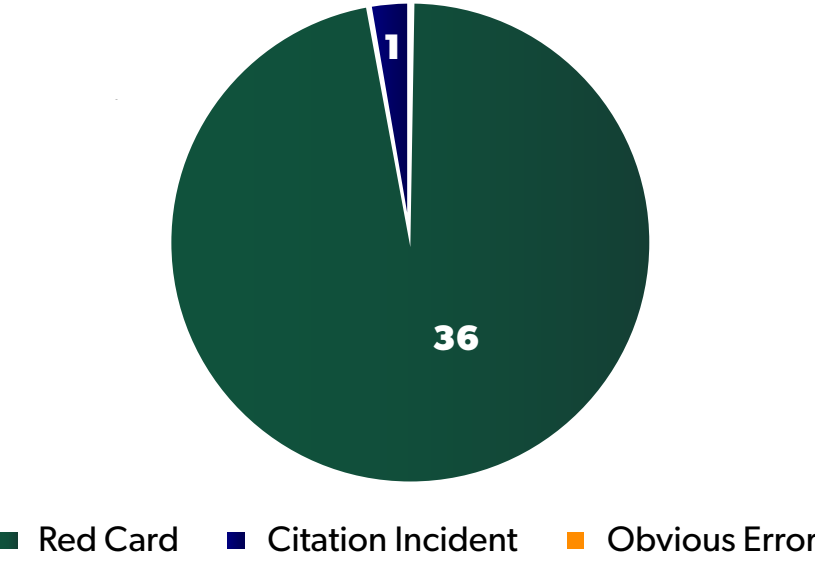
The Match Review Panel reviews direct Red Cards and applies the table of offences in the applicable regulations and proposes a sanction for the incident. The Match Review Panel also has authority to consider:

- a. citation incidents = incidents that escape the attention of the on-field referee
- b. obvious error applications = where the on-field referee has made an obvious error in issuing a direct Red Card or Yellow Card (due to simulation).

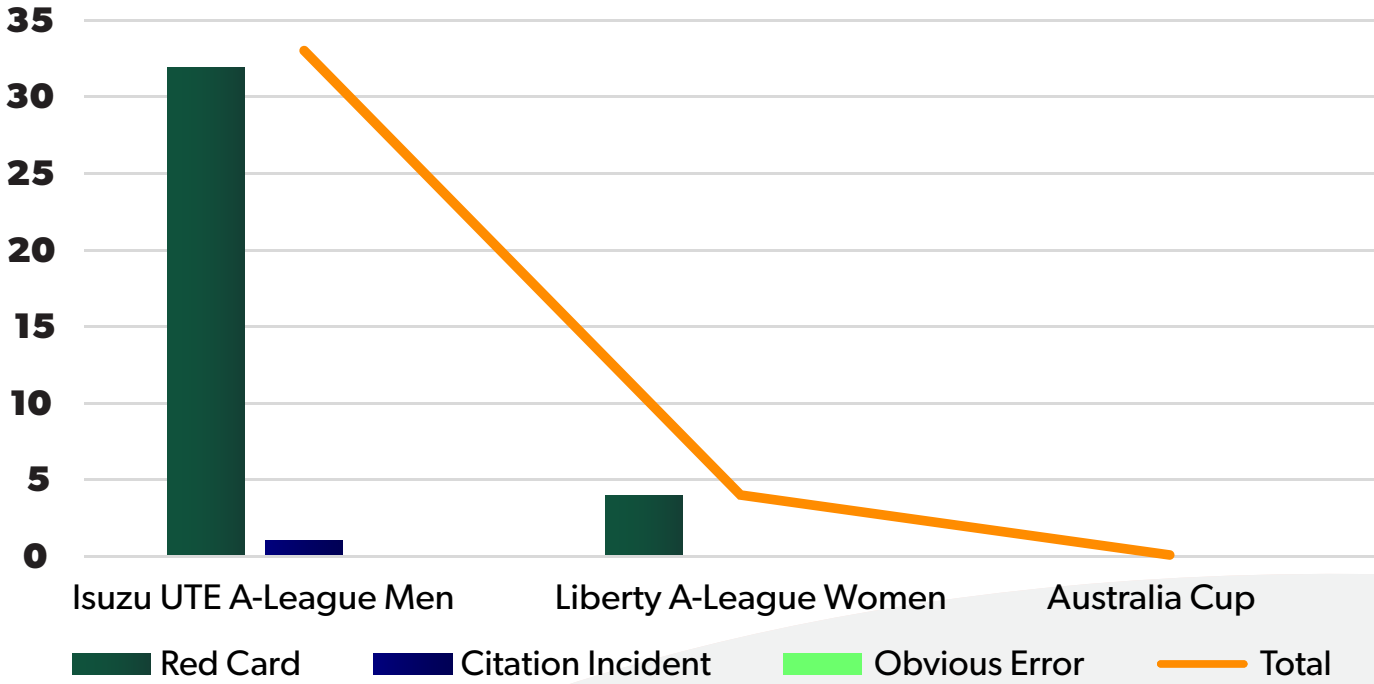
#### Match Review Panel Determinations by League



#### Match Review Panel Determinations by matter



#### Match Review Panel Determinations



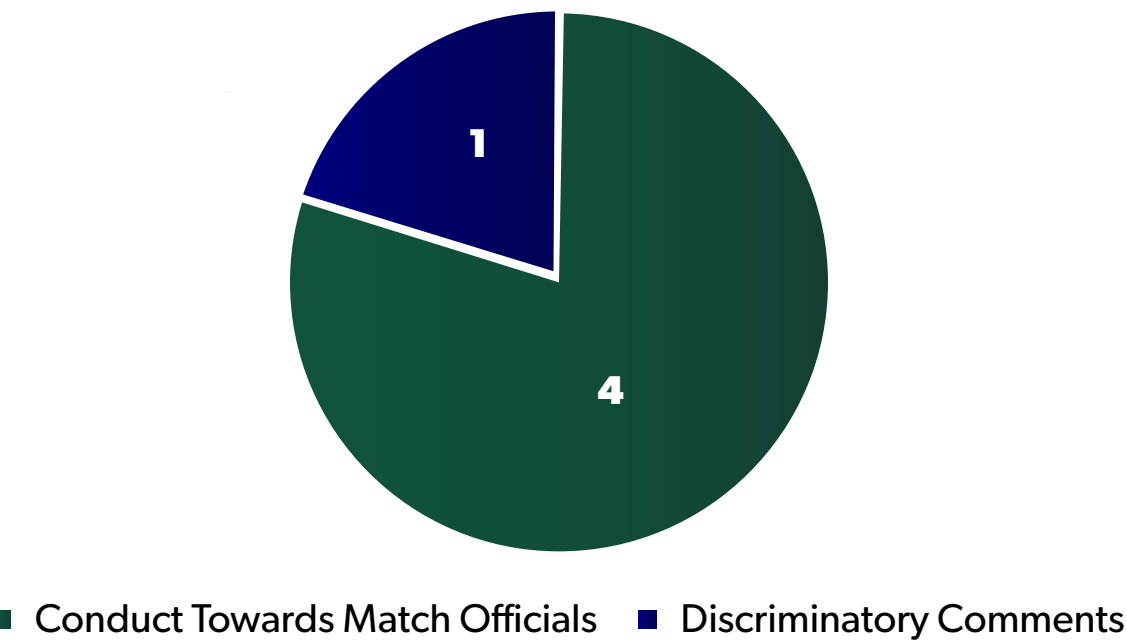


5. National Code of Conduct and Ethics breaches

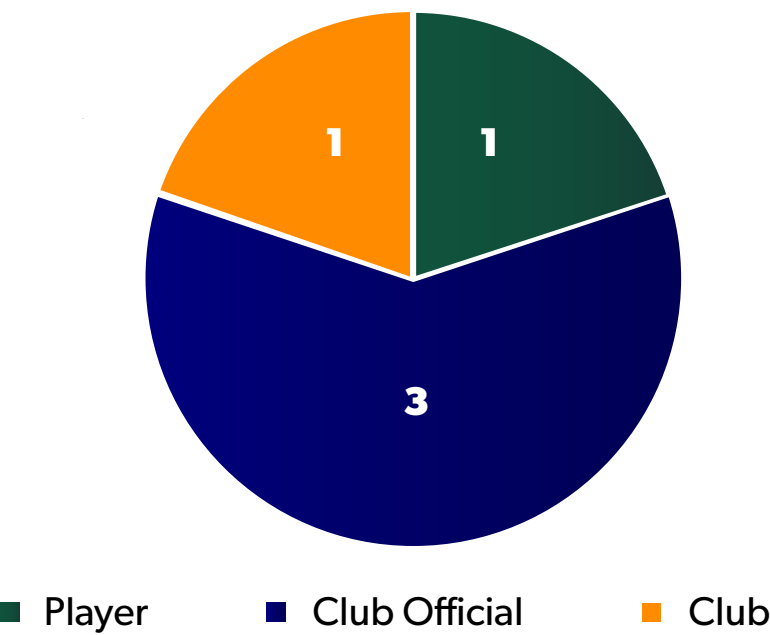
The *National Code of Conduct and Ethics* (the Code) aims to establish a standard of conduct expected from all participants in Australian football. It deters those participants from misconduct that could impair public confidence in the safe, fair, honest and ethical conduct of matches and competitions, or in the integrity and good character of football and its participants.

Football Australia (and other football entities) can issue sanctions when participants engage in misconduct contrary to the Code, pursuant to clause 6.2.

Offences per Category of Breach



Category of Constituent

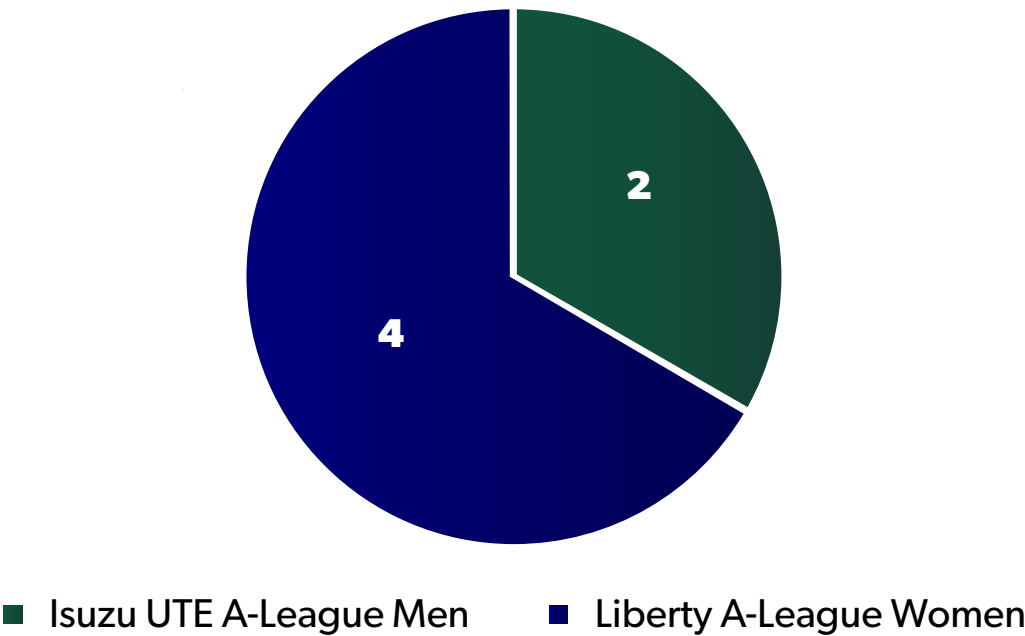


6. Spectator bans

Football Australia has the authority to issue banning notices to individual spectators who fail to comply with:

- a. the *National Code of Conduct and Ethics*
- b. *National Spectator Code of Behaviour*
- c. *Terms of Admission* to a match.

Spectator Banning Notice



7. Disciplinary and Judicial Bodies

Football Australia has two disciplinary committees, two arbitration chambers and one tribunal.

- a. **Disciplinary and Ethics Committee** must determine matters that have been referred to it, including referrals from the Match Review Panel, club licensing matters, obvious errors, and disputes related to decisions of Football Australia to sanction a participant under the Code.
- b. **Appeal Committee** has jurisdiction to hear appeals from the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, and from the appeal committee or appeal committee tribunal of a State Body Member (should their appeals process be exhausted).
- c. **National Dispute Resolution Chamber** is the independent body established by the National Dispute Resolution Chamber Regulations to hear and determine disputes and appeals. This Body includes the A-Leagues Sub-Chamber, the Professional Leagues Sub-Chamber and the National Team Sub-Chamber.
- d. **National Arbitration Tribunal** is the independent body established to hear and determine legal disputes arising out of or in connection with a contractual relationship, disputes between clubs relating to training compensation, and disputes between clubs relating to the solidarity contribution provided that the transfer of a player at the basis of the dispute occurs between clubs.
- e. **Anti-Doping Tribunal** determines whether an anti-doping rule violation has been committed by an athlete, support personnel or other persons bound by the the National Anti-Doping Policy, imposes sanctions and does all other things the National Anti-Doping Policy requires to be done by the Anti-Doping Tribunal.



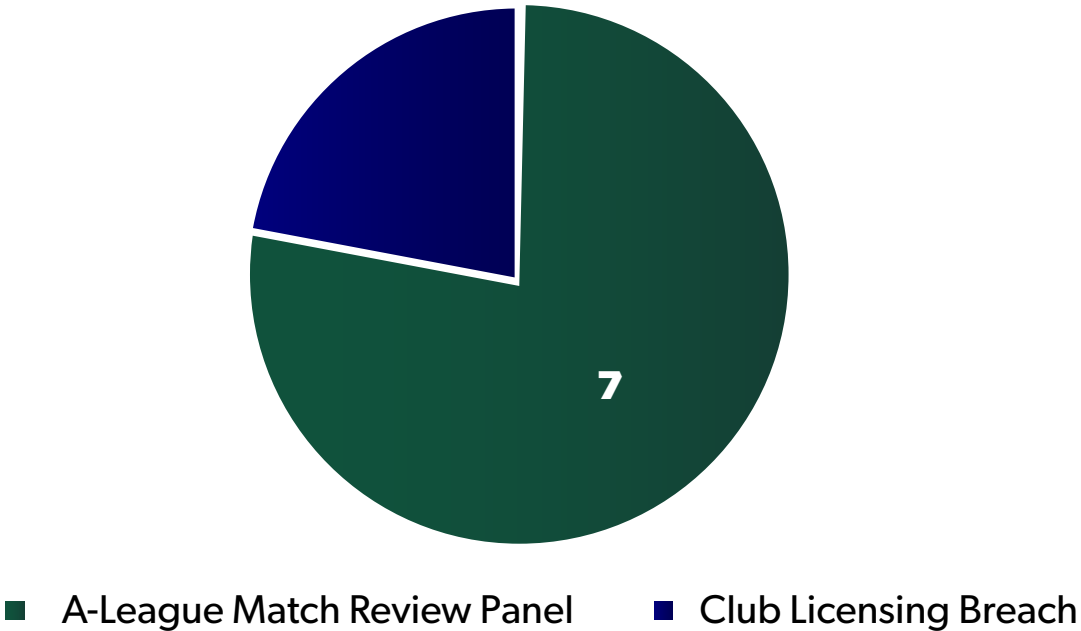


Hearings by Judicial Body\*

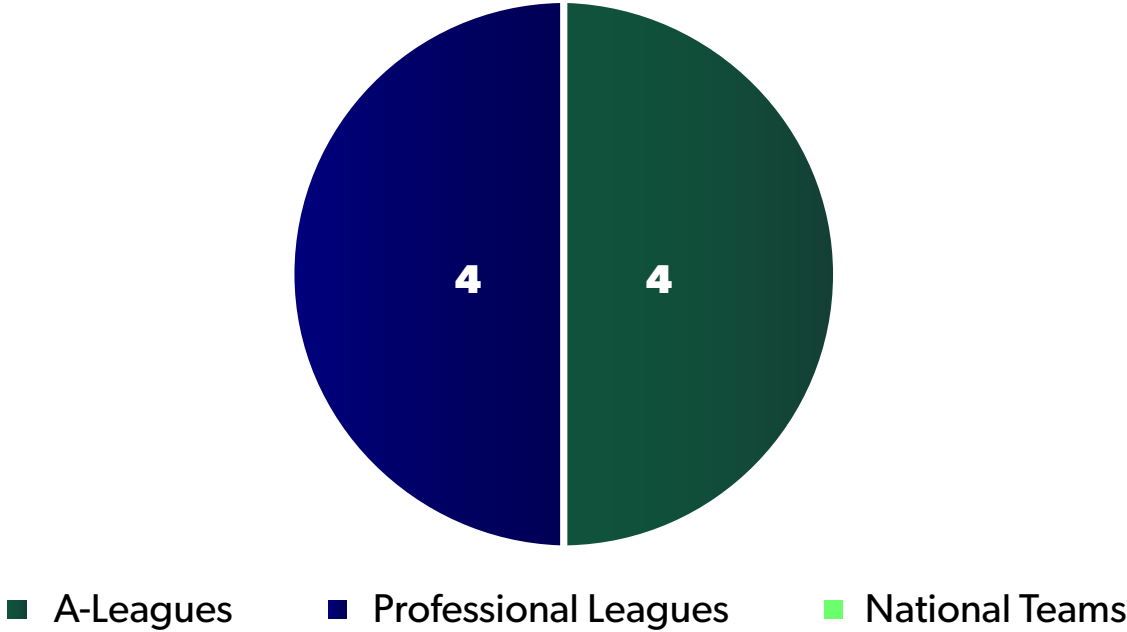


\*Note: Football Australia did not make any National Arbitration Tribunal or Anti-Doping Tribunal determinations in the 2023/24 season.

Nature of Hearing before Disciplinary & Ethics Committee



Category of National Dispute Resolution Chamber Application





# TRANSFER SYSTEM REPORT

## Transfer system reform and outcomes

In recent years, Football Australia has implemented significant reforms aimed at enhancing the player transfer system, making it more transparent, efficient and aligned with international standards. These reforms have contributed to substantial improvements across the domestic football ecosystem, impacting player welfare, club sustainability and competitive balance. The 2023/24 Football Transfer Report provides crucial insights into these changes, offering data-driven evidence of the system’s evolution and outcomes.

## Summary of Football Australia’s inaugural Football Transfer Report

Football Australia released its first Transfer Report, which showcased significant progress during FY2024, marked by a surge in transfer sales for Australian players. Covering the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, the report highlights the success of the Domestic Transfer System in integrating the football ecosystem, encouraging talent development, and enhancing the domestic football economy.

Key findings include:

- Women’s football:** A 46% rise in international transfers and a 200% increase in transfer fees, with Melbourne City setting a national record for the highest women’s transfer fee.
- Men’s football:** International transfers grew by 125%, with total fees reaching \$17.4 million, nearly triple the previous year. Central Coast Mariners led with seven international transfers.

The report emphasised the impact of reforms such as the FIFA-backed Domestic Transfer Matching System and Homegrown Player rules, which have been crucial for developing young talent, particularly players aged 18–23.

An excerpt from the report is provided on this page, presenting the top transfers for both men’s and women’s football. Additionally, the report highlights player characteristics and transfer activity involving fees over a five-year period for players aged 18–23.

## TOP TRANSFERS

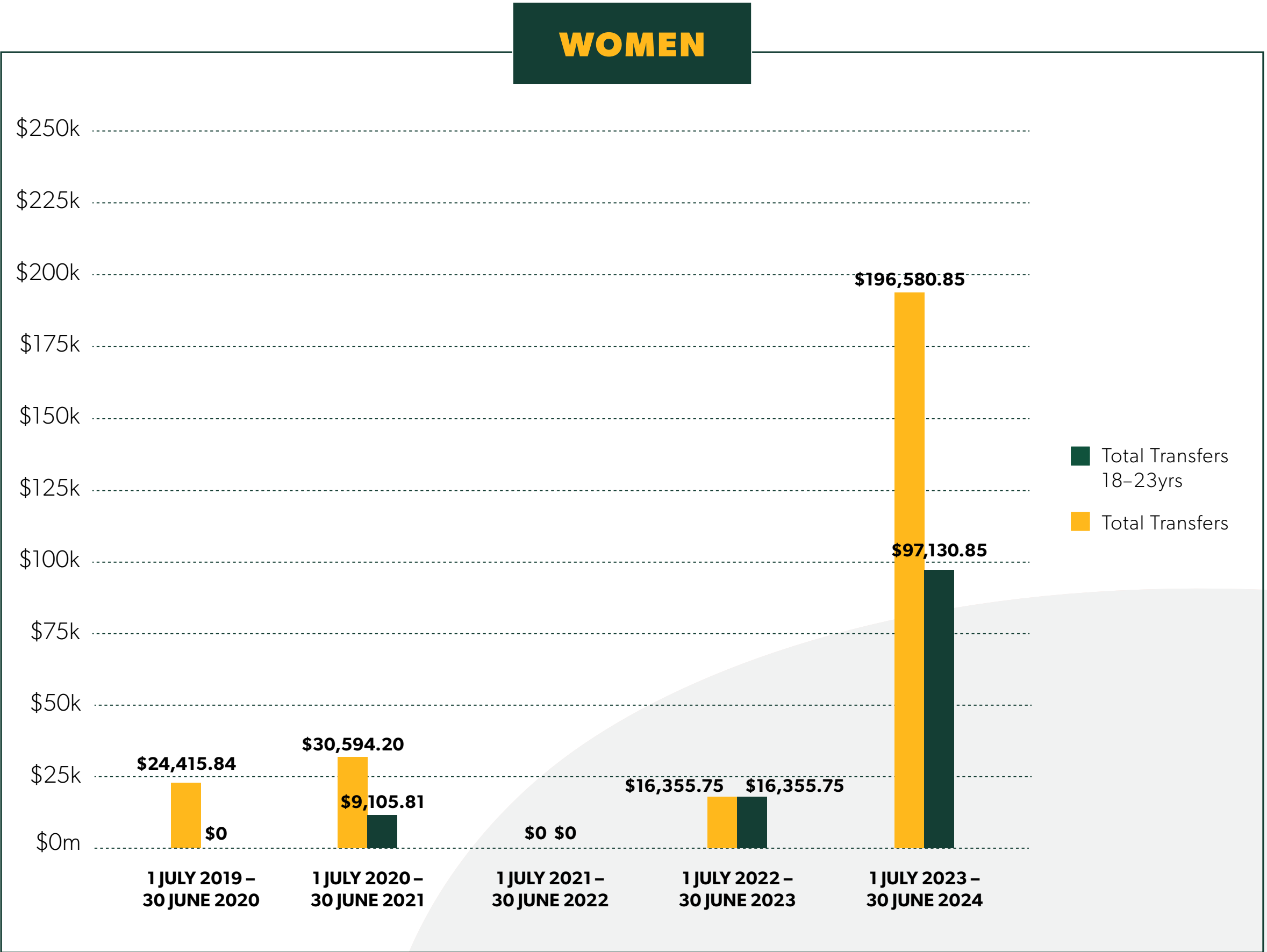
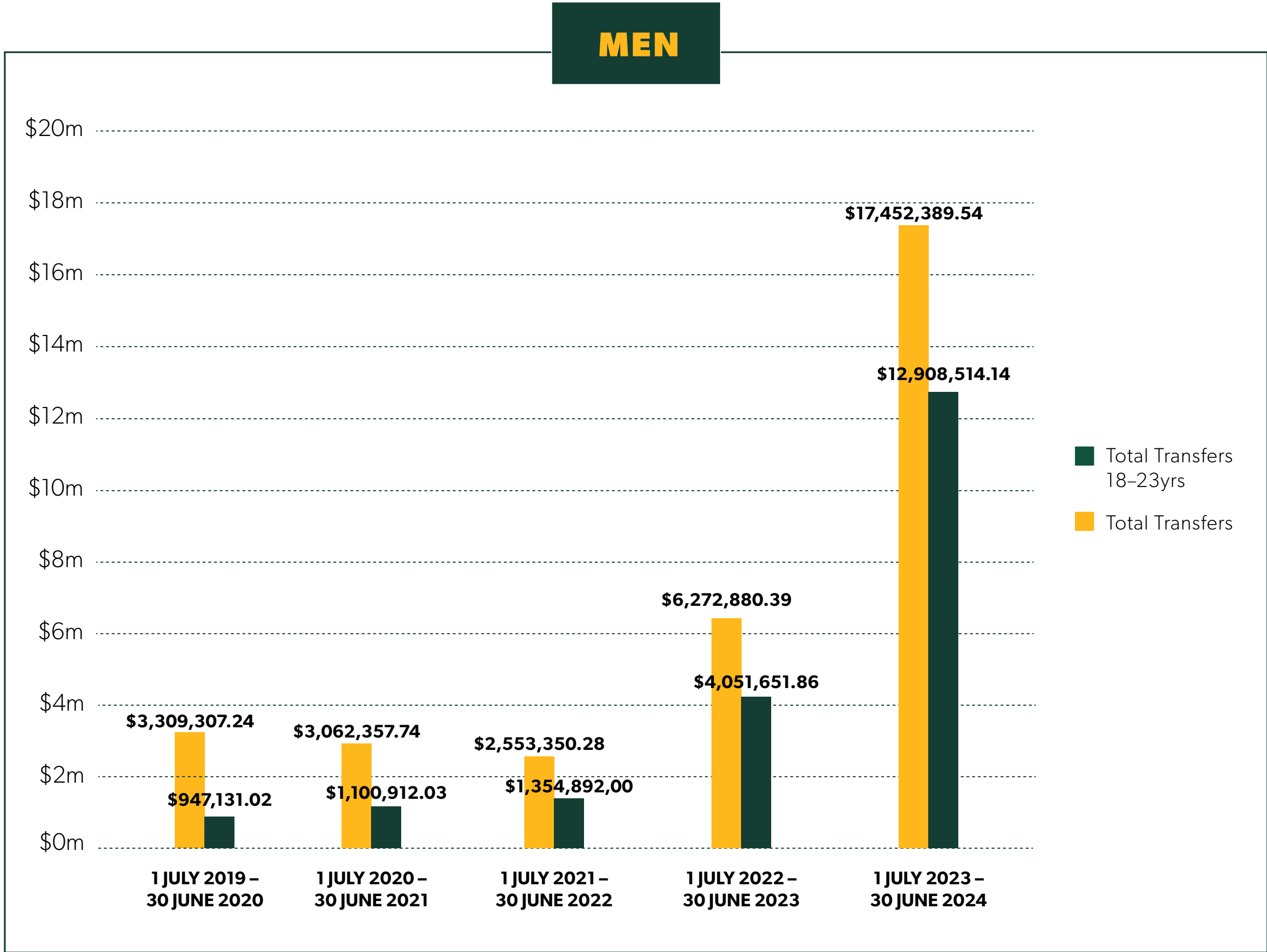
Men	Club
Joe Gauci	Adelaide United FC - Aston Villa
Marco Tilio	Melbourne City FC - Celtic FC
Nectarios Triantis	Central Coast Mariners FC - Sunderland AFC
Aziz Behich	Melbourne City FC - Al-Nassr
Craig Goodwin	Adelaide United FC - Al Wehdah
Women	Club
Lysianne Prolux	Melbourne City FC - Bay FC
Kaitlyn Torpey	Melbourne City FC - Celtic FC
Sarah Hunter	Sydney FC - Paris FC





PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS

TRANSFERS WITH FEES (18–23 years)





# AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP 2026



**In May 2024, Football Australia was granted the rights from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ (WAC26).**

Football Australia established a Local Organising Committee (LOC) as the entity to host, organise and stage WAC26, and this has been operational since July 2024 under the leadership of Sarah Walsh.

Since July 2024, key members of the LOC Executive Leadership Team and LOC Management Team have been recruited and onboarded to enable the LOC to meet AFC milestones and position the committee to deliver a successful tournament. By 31 December 2024, the LOC had 18 staff members with senior positions filled across many of its key portfolios.

The LOC Board was also formed during this period, and consists of five directors, all of whom are Football Australia nominees – Joseph Carrozzi AM (Co-Chair), Jaclyn Lee-Joe (Co-Chair), Sam Ciccarello, Heather Garriock and James Johnson. Two additional independent directors will be onboarded in 2025.

The priority during this period has been to establish the foundational elements of both the LOC and tournament. This includes:

- Developing the LOC's Strategic Plan to define the LOC's objectives and goals for the tournament

- Commencing workforce and tournament delivery planning
- Preparing a campaign calendar to align the WAC26 brand with proposed ticketing phases and football milestones to maximise coverage throughout the lead-up to the tournament
- Working with AFC to finalise the match schedule and to define the scope of the LOC's access and rights in key areas of the tournament.

**“ The key milestone achieved during this period was the announcement of the tournament dates and host cities for WAC26. ”**

The tournament will take place from 1 to 21 March 2026 across the Gold Coast (Queensland), Perth (Western Australia), and Sydney (New South Wales), with the following five iconic venues selected to provide an inspiring backdrop for Asia's top 12 teams:

- Stadium Australia (Sydney, New South Wales)
- Western Sydney Stadium (Sydney, New South Wales)

- Perth Stadium (Perth, Western Australia)
- Perth Rectangular Stadium (Perth, Western Australia)
- Gold Coast Stadium (Gold Coast, Queensland).

The tournament dates and venues were ratified by the AFC Executive Committee in December.

Contract negotiations with each host city are now underway to finalise funding matters, as well as the rights and benefits that can be passed on to host cities.

During this period, the LOC also submitted its online grants application to the Australian Government to secure the committed \$15 million through a formal grants process.





13 November 2024: Media call in Gold Coast to announce the tournament dates and stadium selection



Gold Coast Stadium



Perth Rectangular Stadium



Western Sydney Stadium



Perth Stadium



Sydney Stadium





# NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT



**The year 2024 was a busy one for the Australian National Teams, with the Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas headlining the on-field action while a renewed focus on the Youth National Teams saw a flurry of activity and success across a number of the teams.**

Football Australia also invested in positive changes, with a new leadership structure offering direction and guidance for its National Teams to ensure connection through all age groups and across men's and women's teams.

A connected National Teams Department is driving Football Australia's commitment to put football at the heart of all decisions and ensure the success of its senior National Teams is balanced with the development and vibrancy of the junior programs.

Australians continued their love affair with the two senior National Teams as the CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos continued to perform to sold-out crowds all over Australia and around the globe throughout 2024.

The CommBank Matildas were part of the Paris 2024™ Olympics, but unfortunately couldn't get out of an incredibly tough group that also included USA, Germany and Zambia. And while the result in Paris did not match the desired outcome, a comprehensive review of the Olympic campaign will also help drive the program and structures moving forward.

The end of the 2024 Olympic campaign also saw the end of the Tony Gustavsson era, highlighted by the CommBank Matildas' finish in fourth place at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the inspiring FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ on home soil, where they captured the imagination of the country with a run through to the semi-finals.

**“ Having steered the CommBank Matildas since 2020 and during a time of enormous growth, Tony will always hold a special place in the team's history. ”**

While a full-time successor is being sourced, former CommBank Matildas Coach Tom Sermanni was appointed as interim coach, and steered the team throughout the back half of the year as it continued to drive growth in women's football with 16 sold-out international matches on home soil.

This period also saw CommBank Matildas debuts for Kaitlyn Torpey, Sharn Freier, Daniela Galic, Winonah Heatley, Natasha Prior, Leah

Davidson, Chloe Lincoln and Laura Hughes, in a positive sign for the future regeneration of the squad.

The Subway Socceroos started 2024 with the AFC Asian Cup™ in Qatar by going through the group stage undefeated after games against India, Syria and Uzbekistan before breezing past Indonesia (4–0) in the Round of 16. In a quarter-final clash with Korea Republic, the Subway Socceroos dominated the match but conceded a 96th-minute equaliser before going down 2–1 in extra time.

The Subway Socceroos continued World Cup qualifying in March and June with four straight wins, to go through Round 2 AFC Asian Qualifiers™ for the FIFA World Cup 26™ undefeated and without conceding a goal.

The Subway Socceroos started Round 3 Qualifiers with a stutter, but it was the resignation of Subway Socceroos Head Coach Graham Arnold after the September matches that took centre stage.

After six years in charge of the Subway Socceroos, Graham decided the time was right to step down; he will always be remembered as the most successful coach in Subway Socceroos World Cup history for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, where he steered the Subway Socceroos to the Round of 16. His affinity with the Subway Socceroos as a player, Captain, Assistant Coach and Coach stretches back 40 years and his contribution to the Subway Socceroos is unmatched.



Former Socceroo Tony Popovic was appointed as the new Head Coach, and after a tight turnaround for the new appointment, steered the team to a win and three draws at the end of 2025, including a debut victory against China in Adelaide and a memorable 1–1 draw against Japan in Tokyo.

Australia also claimed two titles in 2024, with the CommBank ParaMatildas becoming the first Australian football team to win a World Cup, defeating the USA 6–2 in the final of the IFCPF World Cup.

The Australian Men’s U17 National Team, the Subway Joeys, also won the 2024 ASEAN U-16 Boys’ Championship, defeating Thailand in the final after a strong showing throughout the tournament.

The Subway Joeys and the Subway Young Socceroos (Men’s U20 National Team) also qualified for the 2025 AFC Asian Cup™ with strong campaigns to set up for a big year in 2025.

The Women’s U20 National Team, the CommBank Young Matildas, finished third in the AFC U20 Asian Cup™ to qualify for FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup Colombia 2024™, where the women played Colombia, Mexico and Cameroon but failed to make it through to the knockout stage.

The CommBank Pararoos also took part in the IFCPF World Cup in Spain, finishing thirteenth with a young squad; this bodes well for the future of the Pararoos.

Australia proudly stood up a women’s futsal team for the first time in 2024, with the men’s and women’s teams both taking part in the AFC Asian Cup™ in 2024.

The results of the Youth National Teams illustrated some positive early signs in Football Australia’s drive to invest in the future of our game and National Teams through a robust and connected National Team program.

FIFA’s decision to hold annual U-17 men’s and women’s World Cups has been a catalyst for the renewed focus on the development and performance of our Youth National Teams, including the need to strengthen U16 and U15 programs to be run in tandem with the U17 team as they strive to play Asian Cups and World Cups on an annual basis.

The arrival of Gary Moretti as the new Head of National Teams in June and the subsequent appointment of four General Managers, David Mason (Men’s National Teams), Briana Harvey (Women’s National Teams), Andrew McKenzie (High Performance) and Liam Cody (Football Analysis, Data and Insights) shows Football Australia’s commitment to the National Team programs.

The new structure has a strong focus on supporting the National Teams across all areas, including player development, data, analysis and offering assistance and guidance to all National Team staff between camps – not just when the teams get together.

The appointments heralded a new emphasis on strategic direction with a National Team workshop in December supported by strategic investment for 2025 and beyond; a renewed relationship with the Australian Institute of Sport; deeper stakeholder engagement with the football ecosystem; regular workshops with and visits to A-League clubs; starting an in-depth staff audit; and a stronger connection to the revamped National Youth Championships.

The first steps in outlining a National Teams strategy were undertaken to ensure the department worked in close alignment with the football ecosystem, the Football Australia business and the Football Development Committee to set and implement a clear strategy for all 12 National Teams.

Through a four-year partnership between the Australian Government and Football Australia, delivered through PacificAus Sports, the National Teams will play regular international fixtures with Pacific National Teams to support the development of players. In 2024, we saw the Futsalroos, Subway Joeys and U-23 Men’s tour parts of the Pacific.

Subway Socceroos Home Attendances 2024

Date	Opponent	Venue	City	Attendance	Result
21 March	Lebanon	CommBank Stadium	Sydney	27,026	2-0
26 March	Lebanon	GIO Stadium	Canberra	25,023	5-0
11 June	Palestine	HBF Park	Perth	18,261	5-0
5 September	Bahrain	CBUS Stadium	Gold Coast	24,644	0-1
10 October	China PR	Adelaide Oval	Adelaide	46,291	3-1
14 November	Saudi Arabia	AAMI Park	Melbourne	27,491	0-0
TOTAL				168,736	
AVERAGE				28,123	

CommBank Matildas Home Attendances 2024

Date	Opponent	Venue	City	Attendance	Result
28 February	Uzbekistan	Marvel Stadium	Melbourne	54,120	10-0
31 May	China PR	Adelaide Oval	Adelaide	52,912	1-1
3 June	China PR	Accor Stadium	Sydney	76,798	2-0
28 November	Brazil	Suncorp Stadium	Brisbane	47,501	1-3
1 December	Brazil	CBUS Stadium	Gold Coast	25,297	1-2
4 December	Chinese Taipei	AAMI Park	Melbourne	26,795	3-1
7 December	Chinese Taipei	GHMBA Stadium	Geelong	30,097	6-0
TOTAL				313,520	
AVERAGE				44,789	





# WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT



## COMMBANK MATILDAS

Following a transformative 2023, which saw the CommBank Matildas catapulted onto the national stage, 2024 saw the team building towards the Paris 2024™ Olympic Games and the commencement of a new four-year international cycle.

**“ The year was one marked by transition and change for Australia’s Senior Women’s National Team. ”**

It was highlighted by the qualification for a third-straight Olympic Games, and the fervour for the team continuing with sell-out matches across the nation.

It saw heartwarming farewells, with stalwarts Lydia Williams and Clare Polkinghorne departing the international arena, while seven players entered the international scene, making their debuts with the National Team.

While Paris 2024™ saw a disappointing end to the CommBank Matildas’ Olympic campaign and the end of Head Coach Tony Gustavsson’s tenure, the back half of the year heralded a new cycle and a fresh focus with the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Australia 2026™ on the horizon.

## FEBRUARY 2024 – AFC Women’s Olympic Qualifiers – Round 3

The CommBank Matildas secured their place at the Paris 2024™ Olympic Games with a dominant two-legged performance against Uzbekistan. The first leg in Tashkent saw Australia break down a disciplined Uzbekistan defence in the second half, emerging with a 3–0 victory. Michelle Heyman, marking her return to international football after a six-year absence, opened the scoring, followed by goals from Mary Fowler and Caitlin Foord. The qualifier saw Queenslander Kaitlyn Torpey become CommBank Matildas cap #227.

Melbourne’s Marvel Stadium hosted the second leg, which saw a commanding display as the CommBank Matildas triumphed 10–0 in front of 54,120 fans. Heyman was the stand-out, netting four goals, while Fowler, Foord, and debutant, Kaitlyn Torpey, also found the scoresheet. With an aggregate score of 13–0, Australia’s qualification was sealed in an emphatic style.

## APRIL 2024 – Mexico

With qualification secured, April saw the CommBank Matildas embark on their Paris 2024™ preparations by facing a resilient Mexico in San Antonio, Texas. Australia secured a hard-fought 2–0 victory with Hayley Raso and Caitlin Foord on target, capitalising

on Australia’s patient build-up play, to break through Mexico’s high-pressing system. The match was an important exercise in tactical flexibility, with Australia adjusting to Mexico’s intensity and maintaining composure under pressure. At 22 years old, Sharn Freier completed a memorable first call-up with her first international appearance as CommBank Matildas cap #228.

## MAY/JUNE 2024 – ‘Til It’s Done Farewell Series – China PR

The ‘Til It’s Done Farewell Series against China PR provided Australians with an opportunity to see the CommBank Matildas one final time before they departed for Paris 2024™. Hosting the reigning AFC Women’s Asian Cup™ champions, China PR, the two matches proved a challenging final hit-out on home soil. The first match at Adelaide Oval ended in dramatic fashion, with Michelle Heyman scoring a stoppage-time equaliser to salvage a 1–1 draw in front of a sell-out crowd of 52,912. The second fixture saw a return to Sydney and Accor Stadium for the first time since the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. It also marked the final emotional bow on the international stage for the CommBank Matildas’ longest serving player, Lydia Williams. On the pitch, it was a more clinical affair, with the hosts securing a 2–0 victory thanks to goals from Clare Wheeler and Hayley Raso. Lydia Williams received a standing ovation as she left the pitch for the last time.



**JULY 2024 – Olympic Pre-Camp and Canada International**

The CommBank Matildas fell 2–1 to the Tokyo 2020™ Olympic champions Canada in a pre-Olympic Games ‘B’ International Match. Sharn Freier opened the scoring for Australia, but Nichelle Prince equalised before half-time break. Evelyne Viens secured Canada’s victory with an 85th-minute goal. Despite the loss, the CommBank Matildas gained important tactical insights ahead of Paris 2024™.

**JULY 2024 – Paris 2024™ Olympic Games**

Drawn in Group B against the then world number five, United States, world number four Germany, and Zambia, the Paris 2024™ Olympic Games was set to be a challenging campaign.

The CommBank Matildas opened their Olympic journey with a tough 3–0 defeat to Germany at the Stade de Marseille. Despite a positive start, defensive lapses proved costly as Germany capitalised through Marina Hegering, Lea Schüller and Jule Brand. The match saw several Olympic debuts for Australian players, including Clare Hunt, Cortnee Vine and Sharn Freier, while Katrina Gorry returned to the Games after an eight-year absence.

Determined to bounce back, the CommBank Matildas then engaged in one of the most thrilling matches of the tournament, against Zambia, securing a dramatic 6–5 victory. The game saw goals from Alanna Kennedy, Hayley Raso, Steph Catley, and a stoppage-time winner from Michelle Heyman. Zambia’s captain, Barbra Banda, was a constant threat, scoring a hat-trick and pushing the Australian defence to its limits. Despite trailing at multiple stages, the CommBank Matildas showcased resilience and attacking tenacity, ultimately securing three vital points.

With their Olympic fate hanging in the balance, Australia faced the United States in a crucial final group-stage clash. Requiring at least a draw to progress, the CommBank Matildas ultimately fell just short 2–1 in a hard-fought contest. The United States struck first through Trinity Rodman, and despite Australia’s persistent attacking efforts,

they found themselves down by two after a Korbin Albert goal. In the dying minutes, Alanna Kennedy’s header reignited hope, but despite relentless pressure, Australia were unable to find the equaliser. The result, coupled with outcomes in other matches, meant an early exit from the tournament, disappointingly bringing an end to their Paris 2024™ campaign and the stewardship of Tony Gustavsson.

**SQUAD**

1. Mackenzie ARNOLD (GK), 2. Michelle HEYMAN, 3. Kaitlyn TORPEY, 4. Clare POLKINGHORNE, 5. Cortnee VINE, 6. Katrina GORRY, 7. Steph CATLEY (C), 8. Kyra COONEY-CROSS, 9. Caitlin FOORD, 10. Emily VAN EGMOND (VC), 11. Mary FOWLER, 12. Ellie CARPENTER (VC), 13. Tameka YALLOP, 14. Alanna KENNEDY, 15. Clare HUNT, 16. Hayley RASO, 17. Clare WHEELER, 18. Teagan MICAHA (GK), 19. Courtney NEVIN, 20. Charlotte GRANT, 21. Sharn FREIER, 22. Lydia WILLIAMS (GK)

**OCTOBER 2024 – Switzerland and Germany Internationals**

The CommBank Matildas returned to action in October as they began a new cycle under guidance of a familiar face in interim Head Coach Tom Sermanni. Up against EURO 2025 hosts Switzerland, Australia recorded a 1–1 draw in Zurich. In-form Caitlin Foord’s penalty gave the CommBank Matildas a first-half lead, before Géraldine Reuteler equalised in the second half. The match also saw the senior debut of 18-year-old Daniela Galic as she emerged from the youth National Teams’ program to capture CommBank Matildas cap #229. The second fixture saw a Paris 2024™ group rematch against the reigning Olympic bronze medallists, Germany. Australia bounced back in Duisburg to record a historic 2–1 victory thanks to first international goals for Kyra Cooney-Cross and Clare Hunt. Cooney-Cross’ stunning long-range strike marked her 50th cap in







style, while Hunt's decisive header secured only the second-ever CommBank Matildas' win over the European powerhouse. It was also a special occasion for debutant Winonah Heatley, who finally recorded her first A International Match appearance when she was substituted into the fray in the 66th minute as CommBank Matildas cap #230.

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024 – Brazil and Chinese Taipei Internationals

The CommBank Matildas rounded out the year with a testing series against Brazil and Chinese Taipei. The first match against Brazil in Brisbane was a special occasion, celebrating Clare Polkinghorne's illustrious career, in front of a sold-out crowd at Suncorp Stadium. Paris 2024™ reigning Olympic silver medallists, Brazil, played spoiler as they secured a 3–1 victory. Amanda Gutierrez scored twice early for the visitors before Caitlin Foord pulled one back before half-time. Despite Australia's efforts to level the match in front of their vocal fans, Brazil sealed the result with a late goal from Giovana Queiroz.

It also saw central defender Natasha Prior gain her international debut as CommBank Matildas cap #231.

**“ The clash saw vice-captain Emily van Egmond become only the fourth Australian footballer to make 150 international appearances for the country. ”**



The second fixture on the Gold Coast saw a similarly intense contest, with Brazil once again emerging victorious, this time 2–1. Gabi Portilho and Lauren found the net for the South Americans, while Gold Coast local, Hayley Raso, responded for the CommBank Matildas in front of her home fans. A late push from the Australian



side created several near chances, but Brazil's defence held firm to complete a series sweep.

After two tough matches, the CommBank Matildas turned their attention to Asian Football Confederation compatriots, Chinese Taipei. Australia fielded a fresh squad, with several emerging players gaining vital international match opportunities. The first clash at Melbourne's AAMI Park saw Australia claim a 3-1 victory, with debut goals from Prior and Sharn Freier. Chinese Taipei's defensive discipline made for a testing encounter, but the CommBank Matildas controlled possession and found the breakthroughs needed to close out the win. Melbourne City FC's Leah Davidson fulfilled a lifelong dream in becoming CommBank Matildas cap #232.

The year concluded with a dominant 6-0 win at GMHBA Stadium in Geelong, as the CommBank Matildas produced clinical attacking football in front of over 27,000 supporters. Leah Davidson, Tameka Yallop, Emily Gielnik, Michelle Heyman, Natasha Prior and Sharn Freier all found themselves on the scoresheet in a commanding performance. The match also marked the final domestic and international appearance for Clare Polkinghorne, who received a standing ovation from the Geelong crowd as she left the pitch. As Polkinghorne bowed out, two young players entered the international arena with goalkeeper Chloe Lincoln becoming CommBank Matildas cap #233 and midfielder Laura Hughes incoming as CommBank Matildas cap #234.





# COMMBANK YOUNG MATILDAS U-20 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

The CommBank Young Matildas U-20 Women's National Team continued their resurgence in the Asian Football Confederation in 2024 with the team joining the elite nations in the AFC's U20 age group.

Following on from their first FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022™, the team looked to build on that appearance by cutting a path to the 2024 edition through the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™. Leah Blayney and her side created their own piece of history at the tournament, securing a berth in Colombia while showcasing some of the quality young talent rising through the youth system.

## MARCH 2024 – AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2024

Drawn in Group A, the CommBank Young Matildas' AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2024 campaign began with a hard-fought 2–1 victory over Korea Republic at Do'stlik Stadium in Tashkent. After falling behind to a 25th-minute goal from Jeon Yu-gyeong, Australia responded with a second-half comeback. Forward Peta Trimis netted the equaliser in the 73rd minute, capitalising on a well-placed pass from Lara Gooch, while central defender Naomi Chinnama sealed the win in dramatic fashion with a 90th-minute strike.

Building on this momentum, the CommBank Young Matildas secured a commanding 2–0 win against host nation Uzbekistan at JAR Stadium in Tashkent. A confident start saw Daniela Galic open the scoring in the fifth minute after evading three defenders to place the ball in the bottom corner. Trimis doubled the lead in the 38th minute, showcasing her attacking instincts once again. Australia's dominance was evident, with goalkeeper Chloe Lincoln largely untroubled throughout the match.

Their final group-stage match against Chinese Taipei saw more mature football from Leah Blayney's side as they secured a 3–0 victory at Do'stlik Stadium. Captain Jessika Nash opened the scoring in the 20th minute, followed by a composed finish from Zara Kruger in the 40th minute. Claudia Cicco added the third in the 81st minute to cap off a flawless group-stage campaign and qualification for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Colombia 2024™.

In the Semi-Final, Australia faced a formidable Japanese side at JAR Stadium. Despite a resilient defensive performance in the first half, Japan's relentless attack ultimately proved too strong, with the CommBank Young Matildas falling 5–1. Peta Trimis briefly restored parity in the first half, but Japan's sustained pressure saw them pull away with four second-half goals.

Determined to finish on a high, Australia rebounded in the third-place play-off against Korea Republic, securing a 1–0 victory at JAR Stadium. Substitute Lara Gooch provided the decisive moment, lifting the ball over the goalkeeper in the 79th minute following a long through-ball from Milly Boughton. This victory ensured a podium finish for Australia for the first time in almost 20 years.

### SQUAD

1. Chloe LINCOLN (GK), 2. Tijan MCKENNA, 3. Tegan BERTOLISSIO, 4. Gemma FERRIS, 5. Jessika NASH (C), 6. Shay HOLLMAN, 7. Milly BOUGHTON, 8. Alana MURPHY, 9. Jynaya DOS SANTOS, 10. Daniela GALIC, 11. Kahli JOHNSON, 12. Tahlia FRANCO (GK), 13. Peta TRIMIS, 14. Zara KRUGER, 15. Alexia APOSTOLAKIS, 16. Claudia CICCO, 17. Madeline CASPERS, 18. Grace WILSON, 19. Lara GOOCH, 20. Indiana DOS SANTOS, 21. Naomi CHINNAMA, 22. Georgia CASSIDY, 23. Sasha GROVE







## SEPTEMBER 2024 – FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup Colombia 2024™

On the global stage in Colombia, the CommBank Young Matildas faced a challenging group-stage campaign. It began with a 2–0 defeat to the host nation, Colombia, at Estadio El Campín in Bogotá, with over 30,000 passionate fans watching on. Despite early attacking intent, goals from Yunaira Lopez and Linda Caicedo in the second half proved decisive.

A second successive 2–0 loss followed against Mexico, also at Estadio El Campín. Australia created opportunities but were unable to convert, with Mexico capitalising to secure victory through Fátima Servin’s 57th-minute goal and Alejandra Lomeli’s stoppage-time strike.

The final group-stage match against Cameroon saw Australia fall 2–0, ending their World Cup™ campaign. Achta Toko Njoya’s stoppage-time goal in the first half and a stunning long-range strike from Naomi Eto in the 62nd minute, left the CommBank Young Matildas unable to respond.

Despite the disappointment of an early exit, the squad gained invaluable experience against world-class opposition, setting a strong foundation for future international success.



### SQUAD

1. Chloe LINCOLN (GK), 2. Ella BUCHANAN, 3. Naomi CHINNAMA, 4. Lara GOOCH, 5. Jessika NASH (C), 6. Zara KRUGER, 7. Jynaya DOS SANTOS, 8. Sasha GROVE, 9. Ella O’GRADY, 10. Indiana DOS SANTOS, 11. Kahli JOHNSON, 12. Tahlia FRANCO (GK), 13. Peta TRIMIS, 14. Alicia WOODS, 15. Alexia APOSTOLAKIS, 16. Avaani PRAKASH, 17. Madeline CASPERS, 18. Grace WILSON (GK), 19. Shay HOLLMAN, 20. Tanaye MORRIS, 21. Amber LUCHTMEIJER



# COMMBANK JUNIOR MATILDAS U-17 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

The CommBank Junior Matildas faced a demanding test at the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024™, competing against some of Asia's top emerging talent. While results did not go their way, the tournament provided vital experience for the next generation of Australian footballers.

The campaign opened with a 3–0 defeat to China PR at Wayan Dipta Stadium in Bali. From the outset, China's left forward, Li Yuhan, caused problems, setting up the opening goal for Zhou Xinyi before substitute Xiao Jiaqi and Zhang Kegan added to the scoreline in the second half.

Three days later, the CommBank Junior Matildas took on reigning champions Japan, falling 4–1 in a spirited contest. Japan raced to an early lead with two goals from Momo Sato within the first 10 minutes.

**“ Australia responded with a more structured defensive display and created chances of their own, with Sienna Dale coming closest before half-time. ”**

Despite a valiant effort, Japan extended their lead in the second half through goals from Miharuru Shinjo and Hina Hirakawa. A stoppage-time penalty, converted by captain Indiana Dos Santos, ensured Australia left with a goal to their name.

In their final group-stage match, the Australia fell 3–1 to Thailand at the Bali United Training Center. Lily Punch gave Australia the lead in the 31st minute, reacting quickly to a rebound after two initial efforts struck the post. However, Thailand equalised through a solo effort from Kurisara Limpawanich before half-time. A free kick from Rinyaphat Moondong in the 67th minute and a stoppage-time goal from Chutikan Kitikhun sealed the result.

Although the campaign ended without progression to the knockout rounds, the experience gained in Indonesia will be crucial in shaping the future young talents as they continue their progression.

## SQUAD

1. Layla ADAMS (GK), 2. Amelia TARTAGLIA (55'), 3. Chloe PARKER, 4. Sienna DALE, 5. Kiera MEYERS, 6. Amelia BENNETT, 7. Sian DEWEY, 8. Talia YOUNIS, 10. Indiana DOS SANTOS (C), 11. Tiana FULLER, 12. Jessica Skinner (GK), 13. Mikayla DUONG, 14. Lily PUNCH, 15. Isabela HOYOS, 16. Ehva GUTSZMIT, 17. Annabelle YATES, 18. Caoimhe BRAY (GK), 19. Danella BUTRUS, 20. Alvina KHOSHABA, 21. Emma DUNDAS, 22. Christina KICEEC, 23. Alice FRANCOU





## AUSTRALIAN U-23 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

The Australian U-23 Women's National Team had a competitive 2024, participating in the Four Nations Tournament in Sweden. The invitational tournament saw Melissa Andreatta's squad face strong opposition from Sweden, Germany and Poland. The tournament was a valuable developmental opportunity, providing emerging players with crucial international playing experience.

The campaign began with a 3–0 loss to Sweden, where early goals from Johanna Renmark and a close-range finish from Ebba Handfast put Australia on the back foot. Despite the scoreline, the team showed promising attacking movements, particularly through Hana Lowry and Kahli Johnson. Chloe Lincoln demonstrated her position as one of the best emerging goalkeeping talents as she made critical saves, but the team was unable to convert their chances into goals.

The second match against Germany saw another 3–0 defeat. Against one of the best youth sides in the world, Australia found it difficult to break down Germany's well-structured defence and were unable to capitalise on their own attacking opportunities. While they showed glimpses of potential, the team was taken down by the European powerhouse.

The final match against Poland was a testament to the team's resilience and growth. After falling behind 2–0, Australia mounted a remarkable comeback, with substitutes Alana Cerne and Anna Margraf finding the net to level the score. The game was ultimately decided by penalties, where Australia held their nerve to claim victory. Anna Margraf, who had an outstanding performance, slotted home the decisive penalty to secure the team's first win of the tournament.

The tournament highlighted key areas for improvement, and despite the results, showcased promising talents ready to make the step-up to the senior team, with several members of the squad earning senior debuts in the back half of 2024.





# AUSTRALIA WOMEN'S NATIONAL FUTSAL TEAM

In 2024, Football Australia embarked on a journey to build its first Women's National Futsal Team. Football Australia appointed Miles Downie as Head Coach to establish the inaugural team before a selection camp was held at The Centre in Dural, NSW, from 16 to 20 December, culminating in the announcement of a 14-player squad for the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025™ Qualifiers. The qualifiers, held from 11 to 19 January 2025 at the Yunusobod Sports Complex in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, saw Australia compete in Group C against Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Philippines and Kuwait.

The campaign marked Australia's debut on the Asian futsal stage and underscored Football Australia's commitment to the sport's growth. Off the pitch, the team garnered substantial media attention, achieving a reach of 3.17 million across editorial and social media platforms, reflecting the rising recognition of Australian women's futsal.

## A Strong Start Against Turkmenistan

Australia's qualification campaign opened in Tashkent with a commanding 6–1 victory over Turkmenistan. Nikkita Fazzari struck the opening goal in the second minute, and shortly after added another, establishing an early lead. Captain Trudy Camilleri then scored with a well-timed header before Claudia Fruscalzo capitalised on a set-piece routine to score. Turkmenistan managed a consolation goal, but the visitors' performance left little doubt about their potential. In their first-ever match, the Australia Women's National Futsal Team secured a comprehensive 6–1 victory, bolstering the team's confidence for the matches ahead.

## Dominant Display Against Kuwait

Building on their strong start, Australia followed up with a 5–0 win over Kuwait. Once again at the Yunusobod Sports Complex, the visitors demonstrated clinical finishing and tactical discipline.

Gisella Pipino opened the scoring in the seventh minute, marking her first goal in Australian colours. Captain Camilleri doubled the lead in the 15th minute, with Nikkita Fazzari also extending the advantage further in the 24th minute with another clinical finish.

**“ The Australian dominance was rounded out by goalkeeper Jessica McLean, who not only safeguarded her area throughout the match, but also contributed by converting a 10-metre penalty in the 40th minute. ”**

The sensational win showcased the team's ability to maintain consistent pressure, convert opportunities, and reinforced their top position in the group.

## Resilient Comeback Against Uzbekistan

The third qualifier against host country Uzbekistan proved to be Australia's biggest challenge in the qualifiers and produced a thrilling contest. The match began with Uzbekistan taking an early lead in the fifth minute, but Australia was quick to regroup. A penalty in the 23rd minute successfully converted by goalkeeper Jessica McLean – who had been deployed in a specialised set-piece role – levelled the score. Australia continued to press forward until Nikkita Fazzari emerged as the match-winner by scoring in the 28th minute and again in the 40th minute, turning the game in Australia's favour. The 3–1 victory was critical, as it secured their qualification into the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025™ and demonstrated the squad's ability to overcome adversity.







### Hard-Fought Win Over the Philippines

The final qualifier against the Philippines was a tightly contested match that completed Australia’s unbeaten campaign. The match began with Daisy Arrowsmith scoring in the seventh minute after capitalising on a defensive lapse. The Philippines managed to equalise in the 20th minute; however, Australia regained control shortly after half-time when Jessica Au scored in the 21st minute. This decisive goal allowed the team to hold on for a 2–1 victory, finishing the qualifiers with four wins from four matches.

### AFC Women’s Futsal Asian Cup China 2025™ Official Draw

Following their successful qualifying campaign, the Australian Women’s National Futsal Team closely watched the official draw for the AFC Women’s Futsal Asian Cup China 2025™, held at the Juva Grand Hotel in Hohhot, China. The draw placed Australia in Group A alongside China PR (hosts), Uzbekistan and Chinese Taipei.

Following the draw, Head Coach Miles Downie said: ‘I’m incredibly proud of the work our players, staff and everyone behind the scenes have put in to bring this team to life. As a team, we respect and are fully aware of what means to represent our country, and a key part of that is embodying what it means to be Australian.

‘The players love to compete, and so we play a brave, dynamic, aggressive style of futsal that really reflects the qualities of Australian football. We’re not just here to participate, we want to challenge the best teams in Asia and showcase what Australian futsal is all about,’ Downie concluded.



### SQUAD

1. Daisy ARROWSMITH, 2. Jessica AU, 3. Trudy CAMILLERI (C), 4. Sarah EASTHOPE (GK), 5. Nikkita FAZZARI, 6. Claudia FRUSCALZO, 7. Clare HOLDER, 8. Alexia KARRYS-STAHl, 9. Meaghan MCELLIGOTT, 10. Jessica MCLEAN (GK), 11. Gisella PIPINO, 12. Halle SMIT, 13. Zoe SPADANO, 14. Marianna TABAIN

### AUSTRALIA WOMEN’S NATIONAL FUTSAL TEAM RESULTS | AFC WOMEN’S FUTSAL ASIAN CUP CHINA 2025™ QUALIFIERS

**Australia:** 6 (2. Nikkita Fazzari 2’ 32’, 10. Trudy Camilleri 3’ 34’ 14. Claudia Fruscalzo 19’ 9. Marianna Tabain 31’)

**Turkmenistan:** 1 (Suraý Mämmetsähedowa 6’)

**Australia:** 5 (Gisella Pipino 7’, Trudy Camilleri 15’, Nikkita Fazzari 24’, Marianna Tabain 32’, Jessica McLean 40’)

**Kuwait:** 0

**Australia:** 3 (Jessica McLean 23’, Nikkita Fazzari 28’, 40’)

**Uzbekistan:** 1 (Zumratjon Nazarova 5’)

**Australia:** 2 (Arrowsmith 7’, Au 21’)

**Philippines:** 1 (OG 20’)





# COMMBANK PARAMATILDAS

The year 2024 marked a significant chapter in the journey of the CommBank ParaMatildas, as the team's determination, talent and passion for football culminated in a historic World Cup victory – making them Australia's first-ever national football side to win a World Cup.

## Key Milestones and Achievements

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the CommBank ParaMatildas' famous victory at the 2024 IFCPF Women's World Cup in Salou, Spain. In a thrilling final, the CommBank ParaMatildas defeated the USA 6–2 to lift the trophy despite the team only having made its debut in the competition in 2022. This remarkable achievement also solidified the CommBank ParaMatildas' position as the Number-one-ranked women's CP football team in the world.

CommBank ParaMatildas' goalkeeper and captain, Katelyn Smith, played a pivotal role in the victory, scoring a hat-trick despite playing from inside the goals and while making crucial saves to deny the USA's attacking efforts. The victory was particularly sweet as it avenged the heartbreak of losing the 2022 IFCPF World Cup Final to the same opponents and at the same venue. Despite falling behind by two goals early in the match, the team displayed tremendous resolve, taking the lead in the second half and completing the tournament undefeated.

Regardless of who the CommBank ParaMatildas faced, their opposition had no answers for the attacking might of the Australians who scored a whopping 32 goals across their five matches while only conceding five goals. Georgia Beikoff, Annmarie De Uriarte and Rebecca Jones were lethal with the ball at their feet and spearheaded the Australian attack, while the cohesive defensive unit of Eloise Northam, Tahlia Blanshard, and Katelyn Smith in goals, proved to be an insurmountable obstacle.

CommBank ParaMatildas Head Coach, Kelly Stirton, reflected on the momentous win: 'We've been waiting for this feeling for two years and we finally got it. Every one of these girls deserve it and

every one of the girls back home deserve it as well. We've done this for them, we've done this for Australia, and we've done this for Para Athletes in Australia as well.'

The final was also the most streamed match on YouTube across both the men's and women's 2024 IFCPF World Cups, amassing 4,900 views and demonstrating the growing global interest in the team.

Preparation for the World Cup included:

- Five intensive training camps comprising friendly matches, nutritional sessions, wellbeing sessions, tactical planning and high-performance guidance.
- Participating in the 2024 National Para Football Championships held at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

## Media and PR Coverage

Media and PR efforts in 2024 played an important role in supporting the CommBank ParaMatildas' trip to Spain, which in turn, enhanced their success. The Media Outreach campaign during the World Cup (28 October – 28 November) delivered some outstanding results:

- 2,320 editorial mentions (Australian media outlets)
- 334 million potential editorial reach
- \$5 million in Advertising Value Equivalence
- 60.3 million total social media reach

The CommBank ParaMatildas have continued to build their legacy as pioneers of inclusivity in Australian football. Their journey in 2024 empowered countless individuals and touched the lives of many people around Australia. Through their efforts at the World Cup, the CommBank ParaMatildas have strengthened the foundation for the growth of para football in Australia, paving the way for greater opportunities and visibility for athletes with disabilities.







SQUAD

1. Rae ANDERSON, 2. Georgia BEIKOFF, 3. Tahlia BLANSHARD, 4. Annmarie DE URIARTE, 5. Laine HARRISON, 6. Rebecca JONES, 7. Eloise NORTHAM, 8. Trinity MCPHIE, 9. Carly SALMON, 10. Katelyn SMITH (GK) (C)

Head Coach: Kelly Stirton	Assistant Coach: Charlotte Ercil
Goalkeeper Coach: Kim Schaefer	Analyst: Rebecca Meiklejohn
Team Doctor: Zachary Baker	Physiotherapist: Cara van Wyk
Physiotherapist: Sarah Kelly	Massage Therapist: Sarah Gill
GM of Fundraising: Kat Hicks	Wellbeing Manager: Janet Drakos
Photographer: Mark Avellino	Videographer: Adam Cavenor
Media Manager: James Coman	Team Manager: Demelza Howard

2024 IFCPF Women’s World Cup Results

- Australia:** 6 (8. Annmarie De Uriarte 4’, 4. Rebecca Jones 25’, 7. Eloise Northam 27’, 6. Katelyn Smith 33’, 4. Rebecca Jones 42’, 4. Rebecca Jones 43’) def Japan: 0
- Australia:** 2 (3. Tahlia Blanshard 10’, 10. Georgia Beikoff 21’, 7. Eloise Northam 33’) def USA: 1 (6. Isabella Stankunas 6’)
- Australia:** 9 (6. Katelyn Smith 6’, 25+1’, 8. Annmarie De Uriarte 18’, 25+2’, 26’, 41’, 10. Georgia Beikoff 25+3’, 31’, 1. Carly Salmon 45’) def Ireland: 2 (4. Heather Jameson 9’, 39’)
- Australia:** 9 (6. Katelyn Smith 1’, 6’, 9. Rae Anderson 3’, 33’, 8. Annmarie De Uriarte 6’, 2. Trinity McPhie 10’, 44’, 5. Laine H Harrison 14’, 45’) def Denmark: 0
- FINAL: Australia:** 6 (6. Katelyn Smith 17’, 30’, 33’, 10. Georgia Beikoff 38’, 49’, 8. Annmarie de Uriarte 46’) def USA: 2 (2. Cassidy Leake 4’, 8. Kaia Spencer 6’)





# MEN'S NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT

## SUBWAY SOCCEROOS

The Subway Socceroos' 2024 calendar year featured an AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2024™ campaign and FIFA World Cup 26™ Qualifiers.

The year began with a Quarter Final finish at the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2024™, where Australia topped their group and defeated Indonesia in the Round of 16, before eventually falling to Korea Republic.

World Cup qualification remained a primary focus, with strong early performances in March and June securing Australia's progression into the Third Round. However, September marked a turning point, with Graham Arnold stepping down as Head Coach following a loss to Bahrain on the Gold Coast and a draw with Indonesia away.

Tony Popovic's tenure began in October, with the Subway Socceroos securing a 3–1 win over China PR and a 1–1 draw with Japan, demonstrating the structured, disciplined approach the newly appointed Head Coach is renowned for. November's fixtures against Saudi Arabia (nil-all draw) and Bahrain (2–2) provided insight into the direction of the squad as they pursue FIFA World Cup™ qualification under the new leadership.

## AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2024™

The Subway Socceroos entered the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2024™ with high expectations, aiming to build on their strong recent performances.

**“ Under the guidance of Graham Arnold, Australia navigated through the Group Stage with efficiency, gaining momentum moving into the knockout stages. ”**

Australia opened their campaign with a 2–0 victory over India, controlling possession and creating numerous chances throughout the match. Jackson Irvine capitalised on a defensive error to break the deadlock, while substitute, Jordan Bos, sealed the win with a composed finish – scoring his maiden international goal.

A hard-fought 1–0 win against Syria followed, as Australia continued its impressive start to the tournament. Another clean

sheet highlighted Australia's defensive solidity, with the likes of Harry Souttar and Kye Rowles standing tall to repel a persistent Syrian side.

Australia took on Uzbekistan in their final Group Stage match, in what finished a 1–1 draw. Martin Boyle's penalty kick was cancelled out by a well-taken Uzbekistan equaliser; however, the result was enough to ensure Australia finished atop Group B and moved into the knockout stages.

The Round of 16 saw the Subway Socceroos produce an emphatic 4–0 victory over Indonesia, in what was their best performance of the tournament to date. Australia gained the ascendancy early and produced a stellar attacking display with Martin Boyle, Craig Goodwin and Harry Souttar all scoring.

The result set up a highly anticipated clash with Korea Republic. Australia took the lead through a Craig Goodwin volley, in what was largely a cagey, hard-fought fixture. Korea Republic eventually found a late equaliser through a penalty in second-half stoppage time, forcing the match into extra time. Son Heung-min's expertly taken free kick ultimately ended the Subway Socceroos' campaign with a 2–1 defeat.



SQUAD

Nathaniel ATKINSON

Keanu BACCUS

Aziz BEHICH

Jordan BOS

Martin BOYLE

Cameron BURGESS

Thomas DENG

Mitchell DUKE

Bruno FORNAROLI

Joe GAUCI (Gk)

Craig GOODWIN

John IREDALE

Jackson IRVINE

Gethin JONES

Riley MCGREE

Connor METCALFE

Lewis MILLER

Aiden O’NEILL

Kye ROWLES

Mathew RYAN (GK) (C)

Sam SILVERA

Harry SOUTTAR

Lawrence THOMAS (GK)

Marco TILIO

Patrick YAZBEK

Kusini YENGI

Socceroos delivered a dominant performance, running out 5–0 winners in front of a sold-out crowd in the nation’s capital. Kusini Yengi scored the opener, followed by a brace from Craig Goodwin, while John Iredale netted his first international goal, topping off a comprehensive victory.

June FIFA Men’s International Window

The Subway Socceroos faced Bangladesh and Palestine in their final Round Two AFC Asian Qualifiers™ for the FIFA World Cup 26™.

Australia faced Bangladesh in Dhaka in what were stifling conditions, achieving a hard-fought 2–0 win. Ajdin Hrustic opened the scoring with a deflected long-range shot, while Kusini Yengi extended the lead in the 62nd minute, heading home a cross from Jordan Bos. The match also marked the debut of Nestory Irankunda, following his recent move from Adelaide United FC to FC Bayern Munich.

The Subway Socceroos then hosted Palestine at HBF Park, Perth, delivering a dominant 5–0 display. Kusini Yengi scored twice, including an early penalty. Adam Taggart, Martin Boyle also got on the scoresheet, while Nestory Irankunda netted his debut international goal. The victory was Australia’s sixth consecutive win of the Second Round of Qualification.

The results solidified Australia’s position at the top of their group, amassing 18 points with 22 goals scored and none conceded over six matches.

September FIFA Men’s International Window

The September FIFA Men’s International Window signified the commencement of the Third Round of qualification for the FIFA World Cup 26™ – beginning with matches against Bahrain (home) and Indonesia (away).

Australia suffered a narrow 1–0 defeat to Bahrain at Robina Stadium on the Gold Coast. The match was tightly contested, with limited clear-cut opportunities for both teams. The decisive moment came



March FIFA Men’s International Window

The Subway Socceroos faced Lebanon in two crucial AFC Asian Qualifiers™ for the FIFA World Cup 26™.

Australia secured a 2–0 victory over Lebanon at CommBank Stadium, Parramatta, to begin the window. Midfielder, Keanu Baccus opened the scoring with a long-range effort that looped over the goalkeeper. Defender Kye Rowles scored his maiden international goal and in doing so, doubled Australia’s lead and ensured a comfortable win in front of a strong, home crowd.

Five days later, the teams met again at GIO Stadium, Canberra, in what was a relocated home match for Lebanon. The Subway







in the 89th minute when a cross deflected in off Harry Souttar resulted in an own goal, handing Bahrain the victory. The Subway Socceroos then travelled to Jakarta to face Indonesia. Despite a dominant performance, Australia was held to a frustrating nil-all draw.

## Graham Arnold's departure

In September 2024, Graham Arnold stepped down as Head Coach of the Subway Socceroos, bringing an end to his almost six-year tenure at the helm of the senior National Team.

Arnold's leadership was instrumental in the Subway Socceroos' best-ever FIFA World Cup™ performance in 2022, where they reached the Round of 16, securing victories over Tunisia and Denmark before meeting eventual champions, Argentina, in a hard-fought knockout match. Arnold played a pivotal role in fostering the next generation of Socceroos thanks to his work within the Subway Australian Men's U-23 program, developing young talent and integrating them into the senior squad.

Tony Popovic was announced as Arnold's successor and given the task of taking the reins for the October FIFA Men's International Window shortly thereafter.

A highly respected figure in Australian football, Popovic brings an impressive depth of experience in both domestic and international football. His achievements include coaching Western Sydney Wanderers FC to the AFC Champions League™ title in 2014 and winning two A-League Premierships.

Popovic's appointment extends through to the FIFA World Cup 26™, marking a new era for the men's National Team.

## October FIFA Men's International Window

In October 2024, the Subway Socceroos commenced a new chapter under Head Coach, Tony Popovic, as their FIFA World Cup 26™ AFC Asian Qualifiers™ campaign continued with matches against China PR (home) and Japan (away).

Australia secured a 3–1 victory over China PR at Adelaide Oval in Popovic's first game in charge. The visitors would score first to send a scare through the strong, home crowd, before Lewis Miller and Craig Goodwin scored to see Australia in front. Substitute, Nishan Velupillay, made his National Team debut and scored soon after, ensuring Australia secured a vital three points.

The Subway Socceroos then faced Japan at Saitama Stadium 2002, in a dramatic, tightly contested encounter. Tony Popovic's side found themselves stuck in heavy traffic en route to the match, due to an accident, with their preparation consequently thrown into disarray. But they didn't let that faze them, fighting out a 1–1 draw with Japan, to earn a vital point away from home.

## November FIFA Men's International Window

In November 2024, the Subway Socceroos' FIFA World Cup 26™ AFC Asian Qualifiers™ continued with matches against Saudi Arabia (home) and Bahrain (away).

Australia hosted Saudi Arabia at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, in what turned out to be a dramatic nil-all draw. Despite several chances, the Subway Socceroos couldn't find the breakthrough, with the visitors having a goal disallowed for offside in the dying moments. Riley McGree almost came close to snatching a dramatic goal in the 96th minute, but his bicycle kick flew just wide.

The Subway Socceroos then travelled to Riffa to take on Bahrain. Australia made an explosive start, with forward Kusini Yengi opening the scoring just 38 seconds into the match as he capitalised on a defensive error. The Subway Socceroos maintained control for much of the game, before two goals in quick succession via Mahdi Abduljabbar put the hosts in front. In stoppage time, Yengi struck again, securing a 2–2 draw and ensuring Australia left with a share of the points – a vital result in the context of FIFA World Cup™ qualification.



## AUSTRALIAN MEN'S U-23 TEAM

In 2024, the Australian Men's U-23 team program was primarily focused on the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Qatar 2024 following their successful qualification for the tournament in 2023. Tony Vidmar's squad also participated in the West Asian Football Federation (WAFF) U-23 Championship and the PacificAus Sports Football Series.

### West Asian Football Federation U-23 Championship

The Subway Australian Men's U-23s commenced their 2024 campaign in the March FIFA Men's International Window, at the West Asian Football Federation U-23 Championship, hosted by Saudi Arabia.

The tournament – played out of Al Hofuf, Saudi Arabia – featured Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Korea Republic, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Thailand. The eight participating teams were broken up into four groups, with each playing three matches throughout the tournament, with opponents beyond the first match dependent on results.

**“ Australia secured a 2–1 victory against Iraq to start their campaign, with Louis D'Arrigo opening the scoring early before Alou Kuol doubled Australia's lead. ”**

The Subway Australian Men's U-23s then advanced to the Semi Finals to face Egypt, with Garang Kuol getting on the scoresheet in a 1–1 draw at the end of regulation, before securing a 2–1 penalty shootout victory to advance to the Championship Final.

Australia took on Korea Republic in a tightly contested Final that ended 2–2 in regulation, with Alou Kuol netting a brace. The Subway Australian Men's U-23s fell 3–4 in the penalty shootout, concluding the tournament as runners-up.

The campaign capped off a productive 12-month period for Australia, with Tony Vidmar's side securing 9 wins in 13 matches – including wins over Mexico, France, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The assembly was the Subway Australian Men's U-23s' last match prior to the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Qatar 2024.

### AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Qatar 2024

Australia assembled in Doha to begin preparations for the tournament, which doubled as AFC Qualifiers for the Paris 2024™ Olympics, having been drawn in Group A alongside Jordan, Indonesia and Qatar.

Vidmar named a squad filled with Isuzu UTE A-League Men talent who had been heavily involved throughout the current cycle, with the likes of Jacob Farrell (Central Coast Mariners FC), Jake Hollman (Macarthur FC), Nicolas Milanovic (Western Sydney Wanderers FC), Ryan Teague (Melbourne Victory FC) and Nishan Velupillay (Melbourne Victory FC) all selected.

Several eligible European-based players were not released by their clubs, given the tournament fell outside of a FIFA Window and were deemed unavailable for selection.

The Subway Australian Men's U-23s commenced their campaign against Jordan at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium, in a match that concluded in a nil-all draw – despite Australia dominating proceedings for much of the second half. Australia the faced Indonesia in their second Group match, with the Subway Australian Men's U-23s suffering a 1–0 defeat. Indonesia scored a decisive goal just before half-time, while Australia missed the opportunity to equalise from the penalty spot. The result placed the Australia in a challenging position to secure qualification to the knockout stage.





The final Group Stage fixture was against tournament hosts, Qatar, at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium. Australia needed a victory – as well as a favourable result in the other group clash – to keep their qualification hopes alive. Despite dominating possession and creating multiple scoring opportunities, the match ended in a nil-all draw. The Subway Australian Men’s U-23s’ inability to convert on chances created resulted in their elimination from the tournament, as they finished third in Group A with two points.

SQUAD	
Patrick BEACH (GK)	Garang KUOL
Lachlan BROOK	Nicolas MILANOVIC
Cameron COOK (GK)	Mark NATTA
Jordan COURTNEY-PERKINS	Alexandar POPOVIC
Louis D'ARRIGO	Adrian SEGECIC
Jacob FARRELL	Callum TALBOT (C)
Jake GIRDWOOD-REICH	Ryan TEAGUE
Steven HALL (GK)	Marco TILIO
Jake HOLLMAN	Mohamed TOURE
Jacob ITALIANO	Jordi VALADON
Alou KUOL	Nishan VELUPILLAY
	Rhys YOLLEY

PacificAus Sports Football Series

In August, the Subway Australian Men’s U-23s participated in the PacificAus Sports Football Series, a tournament designed to connect Australia and the Pacific through football, supported by the Australian Government via its PacificAus Sports program.

Australia played two matches against Vanuatu’s senior national team out of Port Vila, providing them with competitive matches ahead of their Oceania Football Confederation FIFA World Cup™ Oceania Qualifiers.

Vidmar selected a squad of Australia-based players for the series, assembling a group with varying Youth National Team experience, with a view to his side’s next major tournament in the AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026™. With preparations for the current cycle in their early stages, the PacificAus Series provided an opportunity for Vidmar and his staff to work with a younger cohort of players – many for the first time – who will be eligible for selection in 2026.

Australia recorded a 3–0 victory over Vanuatu in the first match of the series. Nathanael Blair scored the opener just before half-time, following a long period of dominance from Tony Vidmar’s side. Clayton Taylor and Matthew Grimaldi added to the tally with a goal apiece.

There was another dominant display by Australia to follow in the second and final game of the series, this time with a 4–0 win over Vanuatu. Rhys Bozinovski broke the deadlock just before half-time, and then Justin Vidic, Hayden Matthews and Oscar Priestman all scored to round out what was a valuable tour for players and staff.





# AUSTRALIAN MEN’S U-20 TEAM

In 2024, the Australian Men’s U-20s – the Subway Young Socceroos – undertook a series of international assemblies aimed at exposing players to a range of opposition and playing conditions, as well as broadening squad depth across the age group. The year was marked by participation in a tour of South America, the 2024 ASEAN U-19 Boys’ Championship, the AFC U20 Asian Cup™ 2025 Qualifiers, and the China Panda Cup International Tournament 2024.

## South American Tour

The Subway Young Socceroos travelled to South America during the June FIFA Men’s International Window, taking on Uruguay and Chile in a tour aimed at providing the squad with exposure to diverse opposition, playing styles and conditions.

The tour commenced with a match against Uruguay U-20 in Montevideo, which finished 3–3 at the end of regulation, with Max Caputo netting a brace and Alex Badolato also scoring. The tight encounter saw Australia ultimately go down 4–3 on penalties.

Their next match against Chile U-20 finished in similar circumstances, with Trevor Morgan’s side coming from two goals down to finish 2–2 in regulation, before falling 5–4 on penalties. Australia fought hard in their follow-up fixture against Chile U-20, but the hosts ran out 2–1 winners.

The tour provided valuable experience to the squad ahead of AFC U20 Asian Cup™ 2025 Qualifiers, as well as opportunity for individual growth in what were impressive performances against top quality opposition.

## 2024 ASEAN U-19 Boys’ Championship

In July, the Subway Young Socceroos participated in the 2024 ASEAN U-19 Boys’ Championship, held in Surabaya, Indonesia. Australia was drawn in Group B for the tournament, alongside Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Trevor Morgan selected a new-look squad

with a view of facilitating opportunities for more players in the National Team pathway and building depth within the age group.

Australia started their campaign with a 6–0 victory over Laos, with Jake Najdovski, Arion Sulemani and Marcus Younis all netting braces. It was a similar result against Vietnam in their following game – running out 6–2 winners – with a hat-trick to Jake Najdovski. A 1–0 victory over Myanmar ensured Australia finished at the top of their Group.

In the Semi Finals, the Subway Young Socceroos faced host nation, Indonesia, where they were narrowly defeated 1–0 in what was a hard-fought contest. A third-place play-off with Malaysia provided more quality match minutes for Trevor Morgan’s squad, who won 5–3 on penalties after the match finished 1–1 at the end of regulation.

## AFC U20 Asian Cup™ 2025 Qualifiers

The AFC U20 Asian Cup™ 2025 Qualifiers in September – an integral part of the current cycle – saw Australia drawn in Group D with Afghanistan, Macau, Palestine and Saudi Arabia. The fixtures were hosted in Abha, Saudi Arabia, more than 2,200 metres above sea level.

The campaign began with a 2–0 victory over Afghanistan, with two goals to substitute, Luka Jovanovic, in the final 10 minutes of the match. That momentum continued with a 2–0 victory over Macau, with a brace to Panagiotis Kikianis – courtesy of a set-piece and then a long-range strike from the central defender. An all-important 2–1 come-from-behind win over Palestine set the scene for their final Group game against hosts, Saudi Arabia.

Australia’s final match was a cagey affair with chances few and far between, finishing in a scoreless draw. The Subway Young Socceroos finished on 10 points, level with Saudi Arabia but second due to an inferior goal difference. The draw was enough to secure qualification as one of the five best runners-up across the 10 qualification groups.





**SQUAD**

Adam BUGARIJA

Zac DE JESUS

Daniel GRASKOSKI (GK)

Jesse CAMERON

Zane HELWEH

Lucas HERRINGTON

Jesse HOEY

Ryley HOLLINGDALE

Pearson KASAWAYA

Dylan LEONARD

Medin MEMETI

Jake NAJDOVSKI

Dylan PERAIC-CULLEN (GK)

Tiago QUINTAL

Kavian RAHMANI

Oliver RANDAZZO

Xavier STELLA

Arion SULEMANI

Fabian TALLADIRA

Ben VAN DORSEN

Max VARTULI (GK)

Luke VICKERY

Tyler WILLIAMS

Marcus YOUNIS

**China Panda Cup International Tournament 2024**

In November, the Subway Young Socceroos participated in the China Panda Cup International Tournament 2024, in Chengdu, China, featuring U-19 sides from China PR, Kyrgyz Republic and Mongolia.

The China Panda Cup International Tournament 2024 was the Subway Young Socceroos’ final assembly prior to their return to China PR for a pre-camp ahead of the AFC U20 Asian Cup™ China 2025.

The tournament commenced with a 4–2 victory over Kyrgyz Republic, with Adam Bugarija, Dean Bosnjak, Jaylan Pearman and Musa Toure all scoring.

**“ It was followed by a tight 1–1 draw with the tournament hosts, in what was a valuable hit out ahead of the AFC U20 Asian Cup™ in February 2025.”**

Australia finished with a resounding 10–0 win over Mongolia – with a hat-trick to Adam Bugarija and a brace to Tiago Quintal – to be crowned China Panda Cup International Tournament 2024 Champions.





## AUSTRALIAN MEN’S U-17 TEAM

In 2024, the Australian Men’s U-17 team – the Subway Joeys – were active across a series of international assemblies. Head Coach, Brad Maloney, and his staff, oversaw a program that included a camp in Italy, a successful campaign at the ASEAN U-16 Boys’ Championship, and a PacificAus Sports Football Tour in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Maloney and his squad were also successful in securing qualification for the AFC U17 Asian Cup™ Saudi Arabia 2025, and in doing so, laid the foundations for a significant program of activity for the next year.

### European Camp – Australian Institute of Sport European Training Centre

The Subway Joeys commenced 2024 and their new FIFA World Cup™ cycle with a European camp in Varese, Italy. The camp aimed to provide this new squad with the opportunity to build connections on the pitch, while gaining exposure to high-quality opposition in an unfamiliar setting.

The camp signified the first taste of a National Team environment for this squad, as they begin their respective journeys through Football Australia’s elite development pathway. The assembly featured intensive training focused on embedding key playing principles and style, while playing friendly matches against Inter Milan U-16 and Switzerland U16.

The Subway Joeys were able to secure an impressive 4–3 victory over Switzerland U16, in a match format that contained four 30-minute intervals, as both sides experimented with tactics and personnel. Brisbane Roar’s Quinn MacNicol was impressive with a brace as Australia dominated until the latter stages of the match, with the final scoreline somewhat flattering Switzerland after the Subway Joeys conceded two late goals.

## 2024 ASEAN U-16 Boys’ Championship

The 2024 ASEAN U-16 Boys’ Championship was the first competitive outing for the Subway Joeys in 2024, as they travelled to Indonesia to compete against Australia’s South-East Asian counterparts in late June and early July.

Australia played out a nil-all draw with Thailand to begin the Group Stage, before dominant wins over Malaysia (2–0) and Timor-Leste (12–0). Anthony Didulica and Quinn MacNicol starred in Australia’s final group game, netting four goals each in a result that ensured they finished atop Group C.

Advancing to the Semi Finals, the Subway Joeys faced a resilient Indonesian side. After a tightly contested first half that saw the tournament hosts take a 2–1 lead, Australia came out of the blocks quickly to restore parity through Quinn MacNicol, before goals to Anthony Didulica and Amlani Tatu resulted in a resounding 5–3 victory.

The Subway Joeys’ campaign culminated in a thrilling Final against Thailand, with Australia coming from behind again to have scores deadlocked at 1–1 at the end of regulation. The Championship was decided through a penalty shootout, with Australia holding their nerve to win 8–7 and secure a record third title.





SQUAD

Jai AJANOVIC (GK)	James HOURIDIS
Nickolas ALFARO	Besian KUTLESHI
Jonty BENFIELD (GK)	Quinn MACNICOL
David BOLONGI	Jay MALTZ
Alex BOLTON	Jayden NECOVSKI (C)
Anthony DIDULICA	MaluaI NICHOLA
Haine EAMES	Charlie PARKIN
Noah ELLUL (GK)	Christian PULLELLA
Alexander GARBOWSKI	Marco SANTANGELO
Jordan GRAOROSKI	Noah SLUNJSKI
Alexander HOURIDIS	Amlani TATU
	Rhys WILLIAMS

2024 PacificAus Sports Football Tour

Following their 2024 ASEAN U-16 Boys’ Championship victory, the Subway Joeys embarked on the PacificAus Sports Football Tour, featuring matches against the Solomon Islands U-19 and Vanuatu U-19 squads.

The three-match tour provided more competitive matches for Brad Maloney’s squad ahead of their AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025™ Qualifiers.

Maloney opted for a core group of players who successfully secured the 2024 ASEAN U-16 Boys’ Championship, along with players who had impressed at the 2024 National Youth Championships Boys’ Tournament, with a view to building depth across his squad.

In their opening match against Solomon Islands, the Subway Joeys encountered a physically challenging opponent and fought

hard against players four years their senior. Despite taking a first-half lead, Australia went down 2–1 in a game that served as an important learning experience for the remainder of the tour.

Brad Maloney’s side would then go on to defeat Solomon Islands in their next fixture, running out 4–1 winners in a dominant display that featured a brace from Max Naylor. Australia finished its PacificAus Sports Football Tour with a 3–3 draw against Vanuatu in challenging conditions at Freshwater Stadium, Port Vila.

These international friendlies were supported by the Australian Government’s PacificAus Sports program, a sports diplomacy initiative developing pathways for Pacific teams and athletes to compete in elite competitions and access high-performance coaching in Australia and internationally.

AFC U17 Asian Cup™ Qualifiers

The culmination of the Subway Joeys’ 2024 program was the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025™ Qualifiers, to be held in Kuwait. Australia was drawn in Group G, alongside Indonesia, Kuwait (hosts) and Northern Mariana Islands.

The Subway Joeys’ qualification campaign began with a resounding 19–0 victory over the Northern Mariana Islands, with Quinn MacNicol and Max Anastasio netting hat-tricks respectively, while Anthony Didulica scored five goals.

A much tighter contest followed against Kuwait, with goals from Amlani Tatu, Charlie Parkin and Quinn MacNicol proving the difference in a 3–1 win.

The third and final match against Indonesia would prove most decisive in the context of qualification, with both sides entering the clash undefeated and with the knowledge that only five of the best-placed runners-up would progress to the tournament proper.

A nil-all draw would be the outcome, and thanks to Australia’s superior goal difference, they finished the campaign as Group G winners, punching their ticket to the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025™ – the first step on their journey to FIFA World Cup™ qualification.





# FUTSALROOS

The Futsalroos enjoyed a landmark year in 2024, making a triumphant return to the AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ after an eight-year absence, and proving themselves on the international stage. Their year was defined by a commitment to excellence and resurgence as they competed in high-profile tournaments across the Asia-Pacific region. From their dominant performances in the PacificAus Sports Futsal Series 2024 to their hard-fought campaign at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024, the Futsalroos showcased their talent and emphasised Australia’s resurrection in international futsal.

## PacificAus Sports Futsal Series 2024

This year, the series commenced with three matches against Solomon Islands at home in Honiara. The Futsalroos, under the guidance of Head Coach Miles Downie, began their preparations with intensive training sessions at Friendship Hall, Honiara, aiming to acclimatise to the humid conditions and fine-tune their strategies.

The Futsalroos improved immensely throughout the tournament, delivering a 2–1 victory in the opening match, before claiming the final two matches convincingly, 6–2 and 8–2. The series may have concluded with the Futsalroos claiming the title and building towards the AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024, but the underlying success was about building off-field ties between two countries united by Futsal.

## ASEAN Futsal Championship 2024

Building on their momentum, the Futsalroos announced a strong squad for the ASEAN Futsal Championship 2024 held in Bangkok, Thailand. The team faced formidable Group Stage opponents, including Indonesia, Myanmar and Cambodia.

A draw against Myanmar (3–3), defeat to Indonesia (1–3) and a big victory over Cambodia (9–2), propelled the side into the knockout

stage where they met regional powerhouse Vietnam. The two countries fought out a tight affair before a last-minute penalty subjected the Futsalroos to a crushing 5–4 defeat.

**“ There has been significant development within the squad from both an individual and collective perspective since we started this campaign. Each player understands the significance of representing the Futsalroos, both on and off the pitch and it is pleasing to see how far we’ve come as a futsal nation since re-establishing the national men’s program post the COVID pandemic.”**

MILES DOWNIE

## AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024

In April, the Futsalroos competed in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024 held in Bangkok, Thailand. Drawn in Group B alongside Uzbekistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the team faced a challenging line-up. The group stage matches were intense, providing the Futsalroos with a chance to measure themselves against Asia’s best.

The squad selected for the tournament was a blend of seasoned veterans and emerging talents, reflecting a strategic approach to team composition. Experienced goalkeeper Domenic Badolato provided stability between the posts, while emerging goalkeeper, Aaron Yu, who had shown promise in recent competitions, was also included.

The tournament kicked off with a narrow 3–2 defeat to strongly ranked favourite, Uzbekistan. Downie’s best-laid plans were quickly





dismissed when an injury in the first minute forced the experienced Jordan Guerreio from the court. Uzbekistan came out hard and fast, but the resilience of Australia quickly won admiration around the Bangkok Arena. Goals to Wade Giovenali and Tyler Garner had Australia in the contest, but it was the group favourite that toiled its way to victory.

In their second group match, the Futsalroos faced a physical Saudi Arabian side in what resulted in a tense encounter. It wasn't until the second half that the deadlock finally broke and the match was blown wide open. Ethan De Melo got Australia on the board before a Player Red Card quickly halted their momentum. Despite being a man down, the Futsalroos desperately tried to contain the Saudis but eventually succumbed to a 4–2 defeat.

For the final group stage match against Iraq, Downie made four changes to the line-up, which paid off early in the contest as the Futsalroos claimed a 2–0 lead. Despite leading at half-time and playing with spirit and determination, the talented Middle Eastern side were too strong for the Futsalroos who would eventually fall 6–2, with Michael Kouta and Shervin Adeli scoring the goals for Australia.

‘I believe in the potential of our players, and we are committed to forging a path that not only leads to success on the court but also contributes to the growth and recognition of our nation in the global futsal community,’ Downie said.

Throughout 2024, the Futsalroos demonstrated resilience and growth. Their qualification for the AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024 after an extended absence was testament to their hard work and dedication. While the tournament results didn't fall in their favour, the experience gained against high-calibre international opponents will undoubtedly serve as a foundation for future success.

The team's journey this year has not only reignited interest in futsal in Australia, but has also laid the groundwork for the Futsalroos' aspirations on the global stage. With a renewed sense of purpose and a strengthened squad, the Futsalroos are well-positioned to build upon this year's experiences, striving for greater achievements and continuing to elevate Australian futsal in the years ahead.

SQUAD

Domenic BADOLATO (GK)	Wade GIOVENALI
Adam COOPER	Jordan GUERREIRO
Dominic COX	Shervin KESHAVARZ ADELI (C)
Ethan DE MELO	Michael KOUTA
Jamie DIB	Grant LYNCH
Daniel FORNITO	Scott ROGAN
Tyler GARNER	Aaron YU (GK)

Futsalroos Results | AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024

- Australia: 2 (Wade Giovenali 5', Tyler Garner 38')
- Uzbekistan: 3 (Usmonov Akbar 21', Rakhmatov Dilshod 21', 36')
- Australia: 2 (Ethan De Melo 23', Jamie Dib 29')
- Saudi Arabia: 4 (Nawaf Aroan 23', 26', Fares Almaleh 31', Abdullah Almaghrabi 40')
- Australia: 2 (Michael Kouta 13', Shervin Adeli 14')
- Iraq: 6 (Salim Faisal Al-Husaynat 14', Harith Al-Obaidi 31' 34', Tareq Sulaiman 30' 33', Mustafa Al-Bayati 36')





# COMMBANK PARAROOS

The year 2024 marked a significant chapter in the story of the CommBank Pararoos, Australia’s National Team for male players with cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury (ABI), or symptoms from stroke. Through a combination of resilience, skill and community support, the Pararoos continued to empower Australians on and off the pitch. They proudly represented the nation at the International Federation of CP Football (IFCPF) World Cup 2024, and continue to increase awareness and engagement for para football.

## Key Milestones and Achievements

The CommBank Pararoos’ participation in the 2024 IFCPF World Cup in Salou, Spain, was the defining highlight of the year. The team achieved a commendable world ranking of 12, showcasing their determination and skill on the global stage.

The 14-player squad selected to compete at the World Cup included two CommBank Pararoos’ debutants as well as the team’s iconic 45-year-old captain, David Barber (Football QLD), who impressively entered his 26th year playing international football, and CommBank Pararoos favourite, Ben Roche (NNSW Football), who came out of retirement to add valuable experience and depth to the squad, which featured eight players with 10 or fewer caps.

After being drawn into a tough group featuring two top-ranked international sides, the young Australian squad fought bravely and won the admiration of opponents for their competitive spirit and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. Despite falling short of the knockout stages, the team finished the World Cup on a high after Ben Roche scored the match-winning goal in their final match of the tournament and the final match before resuming his retirement.

Reflecting on the tournament, Head Coach Kai Lammert shared, ‘We never gave up and all the boys showed their fighting spirit throughout the whole tournament. Even when we fell behind on the scoreboard, they just did not give up. I’m very proud of this

group, we’ve got a very young team, and I know they will step up, get better and we will be successful.

Preparation for the 2024 IFCPF World Cup included:

- Five intensive training camps comprising friendly matches, nutritional sessions, wellbeing sessions, tactical planning and high-performance guidance.
- Competing in the 2024 National Para Football Championships held at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in Canberra.

## National Para Football Championships 2024

The National Para Football Championships, held in September at the AIS in Canberra, brought together six teams from across the country. Teams comprised both male and female players, and offered an opportunity for players to show their skills in front of CommBank Pararoos’ coaching staff. Ultimately, Football NSW claimed their 16th successive title at the tournament, highlighting their dominance over a prolonged period of time.

## National Para Football Championships 2024 Award Winners

- FT1 of the Tournament: Rafferty Bacon (Football West)
- FT2 of the Tournament: Connor Bunce (Football West)
- FT3 of the Tournament: Daniel Campbell (Football NSW)
- Golden Glove: Christian Tsangas (Football VIC)
- Golden Boot: Giacomo Izzo (Football West)
- Young player of the Tournament: Giacomo Izzo (Football West)
- Female player of the Tournament: Katelyn Smith (Football Northern NSW)
- Bronze Medal player of the match: Christian Bitsikas (Football VIC)
- George Tonna Medal (Gold Medal player of the match): William McGrath (Football NSW)





## Media and PR Coverage

Media and PR efforts in 2024 played an important role in enhancing the visibility of the CommBank Pararoos’ trip to Spain. The Media Outreach campaign during the World Cup (October 28 – November 28) delivered some strong results:

- 438 editorial mentions (Australian media outlets)
- 53.7 million potential editorial reach

## Sponsorship and Financial Support

The partnership with CommBank and Allianz Insurance continued to be a cornerstone of the Pararoos’ success. This collaboration provided critical funding for:

- training camps and facilities
- travel and logistics for the 2024 IFCPF World Cup.

Grassroots fundraising initiatives also played a vital role, with the Australian football community rallying behind the team to ensure sustained growth and success, which was highlighted by the success of the Undefeated Challenge.

The Undefeated Challenge was a peer-to-peer fundraising event designed to rally support and raise essential funds to send the CommBank Pararoos and ParaMatildas to the 2024 IFCPF World Cup in Spain. The week-long virtual event was a great success and played a crucial role in ensuring both teams were able to achieve their dreams of representing Australia in Spain.

The CommBank Pararoos’ journey in 2024 was one of resilience, achievement and empowerment. They continue to represent Australia with pride and serve as powerful advocates for inclusivity in sports.

## SQUAD

1. Rafferty BACON 2. David BARBER (GK), 3. Christian BITSIKAS, 4. Jeremy BOYCE, 5. Daniel CAMPBELL, 6. Giacomo IZZO, 7. Luc LAUNDER, 8. Alessandro LA VERGHETTA, 9. Taj LYNCH, 10. William MCGRATH, 11. Augustine MURPHY, 12. Ben ROCHE, 13. Christian TSANGAS, 14. Kaylan VAN HEER

Head Coach: Kai Lammert

Assistant Coach: Goran Stajic

Assistant Coach: Tim Palmer

Goalkeeper Coach: Liam Dedini

Analyst: Matthew Barrett

Team Doctor: Ellie Murray

Head Physiotherapist: Daniel Giorgio

Physiotherapist: Rick Whitehead

Massage Therapist: Georgia Tuckett

Wellbeing Manager: Chris Lynch

GM of Fundraising: Katrina Hicks

Photographer: Mark Avellino

Videographer: Adam Cavenor

Media Manager: James Coman

Team Manager: Benny Roche

## 2024 IFCPF Men’s World Cup Results

**Australia:** 0 def by USA: 5 (11. Nick Mayhugh 22’, 4. Wesley Pincince 24’, 3. Jacob Crumbley 41’, 3. Jacob Crumbley 42’, 12. Chileshe Chatulangoma 60+1’)

**Australia:** 5 (14. Augustine Murphy 12’, 33’ 34’ 41’, 9. Luc Launder 47’) def Thailand: 1 (6. Chanatip Deeman 30 +1’)

**Australia:** 0 def by Netherlands: 3 (12. Sem van Helden 4’, 4. Lorenzo Calkhoven 14’, 14. Harm Panneman 48’)

**Australia:** 1 (14. Augustine Murphy 14’, Ben Roche (OG) 76’) def by **Venezuela:** 3 (3. Edwin Rangel 44’, 2. Enderson Alvarez 79’)

**Australia:** 1 (12. William McGrath 48’) drew Japan: 1 (4. Tetsuya Toda 36’)

**Australia:** 2 (11. Jeremy Boyce 7’, 10. Ben Roche 57’) def Thailand: 1 (6. Chanatip Deeman 55’)





# COMPETITIONS REPORT



## AUSTRALIA CUP

The 10th edition of the Australia Cup in the 2024 season was a football spectacle like no other. A total 758 clubs from across the nation competed for the prestigious title of Winners of Australia and the opportunity to represent the nation in the 2025–26 AFC Champions League Two competition. This year’s tournament was more than just a sporting event – it was a true celebration of Australian football.

The competition saw significant growth in both spectator attendance (6%) and viewership (24%).

### A Festival of Football in Darwin

The Final Rounds of the Australia Cup 2024 began with the Playoffs, held in Darwin as part of a Festival of Football.

For the second consecutive year, this initiative brought national-level football to the Northern Territory, providing local fans with the opportunity to witness top-tier action.

Newcastle Jets secured a commanding 4–1 victory over Western United, while Perth Glory triumphed 4–2 over Brisbane Roar in an entertaining contest. These matches set the tone for what would become a memorable and dynamic competition.

### Cupsets in the Round of 32

The intensity of the competition increased during the Round of 32, with a series of Cupsets that captivated the nation.

Melbourne became the epicentre for some of the most unexpected results. Oakleigh Cannons stunned the football world by defeating the reigning Australia Cup champions, Sydney FC, with a 3–1 victory. South Melbourne FC continued their impressive form from the preliminary rounds, defeating Wellington Phoenix FC 1–0. But the most dramatic Cupset came when Heidelberg United triumphed over the reigning A-League champions, Central Coast Mariners, winning 3–1 at Olympic Park.

These Cupsets set the stage for even more dramatic moments in the tournament.

**“ One of the most captivating stories came from Melbourne Srbija, who made their debut appearance in the Round of 32. ”**

In a thrilling penalty shootout, they overcame South Australian National Premier League outfit Modbury Jets, winning 4–1 after being locked at 1–1 in front of a passionate Melbourne crowd.

This remarkable achievement positioned Melbourne Srbija as one of the stand-out surprises of the competition.

### Goals galore in the Round of 16

The Round of 16 continued the tournament’s high entertainment value, with a total of 38 goals scored across eight thrilling matches.

Queensland’s Moreton City Excelsior made headlines by knocking out A-League stalwarts Perth Glory with a 3–2 victory, sending shockwaves through the competition.

Despite being defeated, Melbourne Srbija displayed commendable resilience during their away match defeat against Hume City on a wet and cold Melbourne night.

### The road to the Semi-Finals

The stakes heightened as the tournament moved into the quarter-finals, with South Melbourne FC, Adelaide United, Macarthur FC and Melbourne Victory progressing to the final four. Each of these



teams produced unforgettable performances to secure their spots in the semi-finals.

In a closely contested semi-final at Lakeside Stadium, South Melbourne FC fell short of advancing to the Cup Final, losing narrowly to Macarthur FC 1–0.

Meanwhile, Melbourne Victory exhibited their resilience with a 1–0 victory over an impressive show from Adelaide United at AAMI Park, setting the stage for an eagerly awaited Cup Final.

## Australia Cup Final

The Cup Final took place on a Sunday at AAMI Park, where 13,289 supporters came together to witness the tournament’s grand finale.

The atmosphere was electric as Macarthur FC and Melbourne Victory faced off for the prestigious trophy. After 90 minutes of intense, high-quality football, Macarthur FC emerged victorious, clinching their second Australia Cup title with a hard-fought 1–0 win. Filip Kurto (Macarthur FC) was awarded the Mark Viduka Medal for most valuable player in the Cup Final while Liam Boland (Olympic Kingsway FC) was awarded the Mike Cockerill Medal as the best National Premier League player of the tournament.

This victory marked the culmination of a competition that showcased the very best of Australian football, with a record number of thrilling Cupsets, high-scoring matches and unforgettable moments.

The 10th edition of the Australia Cup will be remembered as one of the most exciting and competitive in recent history.





# NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

**The 2024 National Youth Championships (NYC) brought both excitement and elevated competition to the annual U15 and U16 Boys' and Girls' football tournament. As an integral component of Football Australia's talent identification framework, the NYC continue to serve as a pivotal platform for emerging players. Many of today's CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos trace their roots to this tournament, highlighting its significance in the development of Australia's elite football talent.**

The 2024 NYC were held across Victoria and New South Wales, with generous support from Visit Victoria, Destination NSW and Destination Wollongong. This year saw notable growth in participation, with an increase in the number of teams compared to the previous edition. In addition, every match was broadcasted through Football Australia's renewed partnership with News Corp and KommunityTV, providing both domestic and international audiences the opportunity to witness the country's top young footballers.

The expansion of teams also facilitated the introduction of an enhanced competition format, replicating the structures found in elite tournaments such as those run by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA. Each participating team concludes the tournament with a national ranking within their respective age group, which will inform their seeding in future events.

Football Australia recognises the unique opportunity presented by the NYC, which gather all Member Federations in one place. This enables significant talent development through Technical Scouting Group sessions, coaching seminars and athlete bio-maturation testing. The NYC provide a forum for collaboration and knowledge-sharing, guided by Football Australia's National Team staff.

The NYC serve not only as a talent identification event for players and emerging coaches but also as a critical stepping stone for the nation's top referees. Daily workshops, led by nominated referee coaches, mentor match officials in their growth and development while officiating competitive national matches.

## National Youth Championships 2024 – Girls

The 2024 NYC Girls' Tournament was held in Bundoora, Victoria, at the state-of-the-art facility the Home of the Matildas. The tournament ran from 3 to 8 July, featuring 22 teams of female athletes who demonstrated their talent in front of Football Australia's National Team staff and scouts. A stand-out feature of the event was the return of Football Australia's Invitational XI, a team made up of First Nations athletes, whose participation underscored the diverse and inclusive nature of the competition.

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Despite the challenging winter conditions,  
**THE 67 MATCHES WERE FIERCELY  
CONTESTED BY EIGHT MEMBER  
FEDERATIONS.**

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The tournament saw a total of 310 goals scored,  
**WITH OVER 500 PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS  
CONTRIBUTING TO THE EVENT.**

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New South Wales emerged as the National  
Champions in both the U15 and U16 Girls age groups,  
**WITH BOTH TEAMS FINISHING THE  
TOURNAMENT UNDEFEATED.**

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The U15 Girls' grand final was a thrilling contest between Queensland Maroon and NSW Metro, which ended in a tense penalty shootout after a 1–1 draw. NSW Metro triumphed, securing the national title. In the U16 Girls' grand final, NSW Metro faced Northern NSW, who were vying for their first-ever NYC title. Despite a valiant effort from Northern NSW, NSW Metro claimed their second consecutive U16 title with a 4–0 victory.





Age Group	Champions	Runners-Up	3rd Place	Player of the Tournament	Goalkeeper of the Tournament
U15 Girls	NSW Metro 1 (4) Jada Taylor (23')	Queensland Maroon 1 (2) Zara Ahmed (4')	Victoria Blue	Abbie Puckett, Football NSW	Caoimhe Bray, Football Northern NSW
U16 Girls	NSW Metro 4 Amelia Cassar (3'), Tiana Fuller (13'), Amy Barker (33'), Eliza Familton (44')	Northern NSW 0	Victoria	Amelia Cassar, Football NSW	Ilona Melegh, Football SA

Age Group	Referee of the Tournament
U15 Girls	Eliza Skinner, Football NSW
U16 Girls	Alana Zic, Football NSW



U15 Girls Rankings	Team
1	NSW Metro
2	Queensland Maroon
3	Victoria Blue
4	Northern NSW
5	Victoria White
6	Western Australia
7	South Australia
8	Invitational XI
9	Capital Football
10	NSW Country
11	Tasmania
12	Queensland Silver

U16 Girls Rankings	Team
1	NSW Metro
2	Northern NSW
3	Victoria
4	Queensland Maroon
5	Queensland Silver
6	NSW Country
7	Western Australia
8	Tasmania
9	South Australia
10	Capital Football





## National Youth Championships 2024 – Boys

The 2024 NYC Boys' Tournament was held in Wollongong, New South Wales, with matches taking place at WIN Stadium, JJ Kelly Park and Ian McLennan Park. A total of 96 matches were played over six days, resulting in 331 goals, and with over 700 players and officials from 32 teams participating.

The weather provided challenges for the competition, with high winds causing disruptions on day five, including the temporary displacement of goal posts at Ian McLennan Park and signage at WIN Stadium. Nonetheless, the tournament proceeded smoothly, with an expanded team structure that mirrored the competition formats seen in the AFC and elite international tournaments. The Boys' competition was divided into four groups for each age group, leading to a group stage and finals series that determined the national rankings.

This year also marked Football Australia's inaugural Boys Invitational XI, a team of First Nations players that competed in the U16 Boys age group, further highlighting the inclusive nature of the competition by showcasing First Nations athletes.

In the U15 Boys' grand final, Victoria Blue triumphed over South Australia with a 2–0 victory, securing the national title for the second consecutive year. The match remained scoreless until the final 10 minutes, when Victoria Blue took the lead and sealed the win with a late penalty.

The U16 Boys' grand final was an intense clash between NSW Metro Sky and Queensland White. NSW Metro Sky took an early 2–0 lead within the first 90 seconds, but Queensland White responded with a goal in the 65th minute. Despite Queensland White's efforts, NSW Metro Sky held on to win the match 2–1, claiming the national title.





Age Group	Champions	Runners-Up	3rd Place	Player of the Tournament	Goalkeeper of the Tournament
U15 Boys	Victoria Blue 2 Jensen Bowering (46'), Luke Becvinovski (57')	South Australia 0	NSW Metro Navy	Henrique Oliveira, Football SA	Sevdim Banusevski, Football VIC
U16 Boys	NSW Metro Sky 2 Ewan Gasowski (10'), John Lawson (11')	Queensland White 1	Northern NSW	Amlani Tatu, Football SA	Oskar Von Schrenk, Football VIC

Age Group	Referee of the Tournament
U15 Boys	Rowan Fisher, Football NSW
U16 Boys	Jock Quartermain, Football VIC

U15 Girls Rankings	Team
1	Victoria Blue
2	South Australia
3	NSW Metro Navy
4	Victoria White
5	NSW Metro Sky
6	Northern NSW
7	Queensland Maroon
8	Victoria Silver
9	Queensland White
10	NSW Metro White
11	Western Australia

12	Capital Football
13	Tasmania
14	NSW Country
15	Queensland Silver
16	Northern Territory

U16 Boys Rankings	Team
1	NSW Metro Sky
2	Queensland White
3	Northern NSW
4	Victoria Blue
5	NSW Metro White
6	NSW Metro Navy
7	South Australia
8	Victoria White
9	Queensland Maroon
10	Capital Football
11	Victoria Silver
12	Western Australia
13	NSW Country
14	Invitational XI
15	Tasmania
16	Queensland Silver





# NATIONAL FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2024 edition of the National Futsal Championships was hosted by Football Queensland at the Gold Coast Sports and Leisure Centre from 5 to 9 January.

This prestigious competition saw significant milestones achieved, elevating the event for both players and spectators alike.

Over the course of five futsal-filled days, 251 games were played, featuring 88 teams, 1,160 participants, and a remarkable 1,873 goals scored.

The championships officially began with a vibrant opening ceremony, which featured a Welcome to Country. The event was attended by government officials, Football Australia representatives and the Football Queensland Board. As junior and senior divisions competed simultaneously, younger players had the exciting opportunity to watch some of the nation's top futsal talent vie for the prestigious National Futsal Championships title.

The tournament culminated in an outstanding closing ceremony at Warner Bros. Movie World, where participants and spectators were given exclusive access to the theme park after the awards ceremony and formalities.

## New addition: Member Federation Champion

A major highlight of the 2024 National Futsal Championships was the introduction of the Member Federation Champion award. This new accolade was determined by a points-based system, recognising the overall winning Member Federation based on final representation across all divisions. Football NSW claimed the inaugural Member Federation Champion trophy.

## Futsalroos scouting platform

The National Futsal Championships once again served as a key scouting platform for the Futsalroos, the national futsal team of Australia. Futsalroos' Head Coach Miles Downie was present throughout the tournament, closely monitoring talent in both the Open Men and Women divisions, identifying potential future stars for the respective National Teams.

In addition, a futsal coaching workshop was hosted during the tournament, providing Member Federation futsal coaches with valuable professional development opportunities to enhance their coaching skills and implement key takeaways throughout the competition.

Football Australia would like to extend its sincere gratitude to Football Queensland for their exceptional hosting of the 2024 National Futsal Championships, delivered in partnership with Tourism and Events Queensland and Experience Gold Coast.





2024 National Futsal Championships Winners

Age Group	Champions	Runners-Up	Player of the Tournament	Goalkeeper of the Tournament	Coach of the Tournament
U12 Boys	Football Queensland White	Football Queensland Maroon	Will Zillman, Football Queensland White	Noah Smyth, Football Queensland Maroon	Dane Smith, Football Queensland
U13 Boys	Football Queensland	Football Victoria	Dylan Winardi, Football West	Adam Zanatta, Football Queensland	Thirone Correia, Football Queensland
U14 Boys	Football Queensland	Football NSW Country	Baxter Blyth, Football Queensland	Baxter Blyth, Football Queensland	Fernando Oliveira, Football Queensland
U15 Boys	Football NSW Metro	Football Queensland	Cadel Zwangobani, Capital Football/ Andrija Rakic, Capital Football	Wyatt Menicanin, Football Queensland	Elie Darwich, Capital Football
U16 Boys	Football NSW Metro	Football Tasmania	Mason Ngaha, Football Queensland/ Blake Koitka, Football Queensland	Blake Koitka, Football Queensland	Jake French, Football Tasmania
Youth Men	Football NSW Lightning	Football Queensland	Jay De Gouveia, Football NSW Thunder	Toby Ryan, Football NSW Thunder	Chris Castro, Football West
Open Men	Football NSW Thunder	Football Victoria	Andre Caro Salve, Football Victoria Moreland	Aaron Yu, Football West	Steven Knight, Football NSW Thunder
U13 Girls	Football NSW Thunder	Capital Football	Mackenzie Bradstock, Football NSW Thunder	Taya Hurcum, Football NSW Thunder	Amanda Millgate, Football NSW
U15 Girls	Football NSW Lightning	Football NSW Thunder	Tiarna Ruberto, Capital Football	Tiarna Ruberto, Capital Football	Matt Cachia, Capital Football
U17 Girls	Football Queensland	Capital Football	Reilly Yuen, Capital Football	Isabella Coelho, Football NSW Metro	George Lethbridge, Football NSW
Open Women	Football Queensland Maroon	Football Queensland White	Gisella Pipino, Football NSW Thunder	Jessica McLean, Football Queensland Maroon	Robert Varela, Football NSW
AWD Mixed	Football Queensland Maroon	Football Victoria	Michael Giallourakis, Football Queensland Maroon	Katelyn Smith, Football Queensland Maroon	Trudy Bartlett, Football Queensland

2024 National Futsal Championships Referee Awards

Winner	Award
Peter Liaros	Referee of the Tournament
Tom Dale	Ian Timms Rookie Referee of the Tournament
Jayden Betterman	Young Referee of the Tournament





# A-LEAGUES REPORT

The year 2024 was historic for the A-Leagues, matched with continued growth and exciting football.

## NINJA A-LEAGUE WOMEN

The 2023/24 Liberty A-League Women season was a record-breaking year for women's football in Australia, with record crowds and club memberships, and incredible football.

For the first time ever, the regular season was extended to 22 games – in line with global benchmarks – as the Central Coast Mariners rejoined the Liberty A-League Women and became the third new team to join the league in as many seasons. With the addition of a 12th team, the Finals Series was also expanded from four to six teams, with the format mirroring the Isuzu UTE A-League Men.

It was a hotly contested 2023/24 season as the Premier's Plate race came down to the final minutes in Perth, with Melbourne City winning to pip Sydney FC and claim their third Premier's Plate. As the stand-out teams all season, Melbourne City and Sydney FC maintained their stellar form into the Finals Series. The two sides met in a nail-biting Liberty A-League Women 2024 Grand Final at AAMI Park, with Sydney FC winning a tight contest 1–0 to be crowned champions for a record fifth time.

**“ The 2024 grand final culminated the biggest ever year of women's football in the A-League on the back of the hype from the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. ”**

The 2023/24 Liberty A-League Women season became the most attended season of any women's sport in Australia ever – a 108% increase on the previous season. Club memberships also increased a staggering 611%; more than 28,000 young fans signed up for the Liberty A-League Pass and the regular season delivered eight of the top 10 standalone regular season crowds in competition history.

The growing investment in the women's game continued to deliver rewards on the pitch, too, as the league continued to develop world-class talent. Local stars shone as Western Sydney Wanderers midfielder Sophie Harding claimed her first Julie Dolan Medal after an incredible 2023/24 season, while Melbourne City rising star Daniela Galic was awarded Young Footballer of the Year, having played an influential role in her side's Premier's Plate winning season.

The growing talent pool also drew international attention, with the local outbound transfer record broken three times in 2024: Kaitlyn Torpey (Melbourne City to San Diego Wave), Lysianne Proulx (Melbourne City to Bay FC) and Macey Fraser (Wellington Phoenix FC to Utah Royals).

The A-League Women continued to be the proven pathway for current and future CommBank Matildas. Out of 23 players selected in the CommBank Young Matildas squad for the AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup 2024™, 22 came from the A-League Women, while the final CommBank Matildas squad of 2024 featured 15 A-League Women players in the extended squad to face Brazil and Chinese Taipei.

Continuing the momentum from the record-breaking 2023/24 season, the 2024/25 season saw a really strong start. In the off-season, a new naming rights partner was secured, SharkNinja, as local investment and interest in the game continued to grow. The new partnership also saw an increase in the minimum number of free-to-air games from one to at least 11, as the regular season also extended to a 23-game campaign.

The 2024/25 season also saw the introduction of a new AFC Women's Champions League™. The 2024 Premier's Plate winners, Melbourne City, represented the Ninja A-League Women in the lucrative continental competition, winning all three group games to advance to the quarter-finals to be played in early 2025.



# ISUZU UTE A-LEAGUE MEN

The 2023/24 Isuzu UTE A-League Men season was one to remember, with the Central Coast Mariners becoming the first Australian side to win a historic treble: the A-League Men Premier's Plate, AFC Cup™ and A-League Men Championship.

The stand-out side all season, the Mariners secured the Premier's Plate in the final round, just edging out Wellington Phoenix. Inspired by Josh Nisbet being awarded the 2024 Johnny Warren Medal, and with a youthful and hungry team, the Central Coast Mariners carried the momentum from their league and continental success to win the 2024 grand final in front of a sold-out home crowd in Gosford, beating Melbourne Victory 3–1 in extra time to win their second consecutive A-League Men Championship.

It was a record Finals Series, with sold-out crowds and incredible football, and it capped off a third consecutive year of growth across the Isuzu UTE A-League Men. Overall attendance grew 7% year on year, with an average attendance of 8,550 (the highest it has been since the last pre-COVID-19 season), and free-to-air average viewership increased by 11% as league crowds and visibility continued to grow.

On the field, the league continued to see the rise of great young talent and a record number of minutes for players under 23, with a 46% jump year on year, benefiting National Teams, exciting fans and adding to the incredibly entertaining football.

Headlined by the joint 2024 Young Footballer of the Year awardees, Wellington Phoenix's Alex Paulsen and Adelaide United's Nestory Irankunda, these U-23 rising stars also attracted the attention of some of the biggest leagues in the world, resulting in a record year of outbound transfers – over \$20 million in 2024 (a 63% increase on 2023).

A growing amount of A-League Men talent also featured in the senior- and youth-level National Teams throughout 2024, with the final Subway Socceroos squad of the year featuring seven current players from the Isuzu UTE A-League Men, while 20 of the 26-man squad had played in the A-League.

In 2024, the A-Leagues also celebrated the start of the 20th anniversary season, welcoming new side Auckland FC (the Black Knights) to the Isuzu UTE A-League Men. The New Zealand club made a record start to the 2024/25 season by winning their first six games, making them the most successful new team in A-League history. The Black Knights also broke the Australian men's national league record for the longest time (532 minutes) without conceding a goal to start a season, after keeping clean sheets in their opening five matches.

It was also a really strong start to the 2024/25 season across the league, with overall attendance growing 30% year on year and the free-to-air national TV audience up 34% across the first four rounds of the Isuzu UTE A-League Men, as the league continues its growth trajectory.

## Major events

There were a number of new major events on the 2024 domestic football calendar. In January, the A-League became the first league in Australia to host a full men's and women's round in a single city; Sydney played host to **Unite Round**, with all 12 men's and women's matches played across the harbour city.

A football feast for the family that included grassroots clinics, player signings, a multicultural march and fun on and off the field, the event united the football community. In partnership with Destination NSW, the event was replicated at the start of the 2024/25 season, with an expanded grassroots tournament, buzzing fan zone and huge Sydney derby, which saw crowds grow 50% on the first-ever Unite Round.

In May, during the men's 2024 grand final week, the A-League also hosted an **All Stars doubleheader**, which included the first-ever A-League All Stars Women side. Beginning the historic night at Melbourne's Marvel Stadium, the A-League All Stars Men faced the English Premier League's Newcastle United, and Head Coach Patrick Kisnorbo's side defeated the visitors 8–0 thanks to a stunning performance by some of the competition's best and brightest.







Headlining the doubleheader in front of more than 42,000 fans, the A-League All Stars Women team took on Women's Super League giants Arsenal Women FC and their three CommBank Matildas Kyra Cooney-Cross, Steph Catley and Caitlin Foord. Despite a tense contest, global star Alessia Russo's exquisite finish saw Arsenal Women FC hold on to win 1–0.

## Innovation

### Live VAR announcements

The A-League became the first league within the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to debut live Video Assistant Referee (VAR) announcements during the Isuzu UTE A-League Men 2023/24 Finals Series.

Following a successful trial, the technology was introduced for the 2024/25 regular season to enhance transparency in the decision-making process undertaken by match officials and enable fans to hear the centre referee declare their final decisions and rationale after conducting an on-field review.

### Domestic Transfer System Reform

In October 2024, Football Australia, Australian Professional Leagues (APL) and Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) announced a joint commitment to review and phase out what is commonly referred to as the 'Caceres Clause' ahead of the 2025/26 A-League season.

The Caceres Clause prevents a player from being registered in the A-League if a multi-club ownership (MCO) purchases a player from an A-League club and attempts to transfer or loan that player to the MCO's related A-League club. It was identified that the Clause is no longer fit for purpose given the evolution of the Australian football landscape, the increased investment in clubs and players by international clubs, and the broader globalisation of the football economy.

The change, implemented ahead of the 2024/25 season, enabled the immediate transfer of players involving clubs with common

ownership, but with guardrails limiting MCOs from registering more than two players in the A-League at any given time, and ensuring a fair salary cap treatment based on the player's former and current contract values.

This review formed part of a broader commitment by the three organisations to examine the professional game's economic model holistically, including a review of transfer fee payments between A-League clubs.

The changes will be considered by the professional football committees that are already in place within the APL and PFA collective bargaining agreement, with Football Australia invited to join in its capacity as regulator.

## Pride Celebration

In a celebration of diversity and inclusivity, the APL was proud to continue its **Pride Celebration** in 2024, signifying the code's ongoing commitment to making football accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Building on the success of 2023, when the A-League became the first league in the world to hold simultaneous men's and women's pride celebrations, the 2024 celebration was once again grounded in education.

In partnership with Pride Cup and the PFA, the APL developed and delivered a series of initiatives, including a comprehensive inclusion training program for players, staff, executives and partners, and the rollout of GoBubble technology to help moderate online hate.

The March celebrations were also headlined by the annual Pride Cup doubleheader between Adelaide United and Melbourne Victory, while across the weekends, a number of men's and women's teams celebrated pride in their own way, such as by engaging with community groups, displaying rainbow corner flags and wearing rainbow armbands; some clubs even played in a special pride kit and rainbow socks.





# NATIONAL SECOND TIER



**Football Australia commenced a second Request for Proposal (RFP) Application Process in January 2024, focused on securing additional foundation clubs to participate in a standalone National Second Tier (NST) home and away league competition expected to commence in 2025.**

The RFP process has, to date, identified 14 clubs representing six states that meet the technical standards required to secure a National Second Tier licence; however, following a robust due diligence process, it was determined that the eight foundation clubs originally selected in late 2023 were more advanced in their financial readiness. It was also accepted that the remaining six clubs, and any new applicants, should be given sufficient time to advance their respective bid proposals.

In the meantime, Football Australia continued to engage with key stakeholders, including the foundation clubs, to remodel the NST competition format. A subsequent announcement was made in late 2024 outlining the launch of the National Second Tier, marking a significant commitment to elevate the domestic club football landscape in Australia.

The National Second Tier will kick off on Friday 10 October 2025, in a contemporary and sustainable competition format, featuring 16 teams, eight NST foundation clubs and eight Member Federation invitational clubs participating in group stage matches and an elimination finals series.

This structure has been designed to promote a high degree of competitive integrity and commercial appeal. This commitment also ensures alignment with the original strategic objectives of connecting the football pyramid in Australia, investing in talent development, and celebrating the return of iconic heritage clubs to the national stage.

James Johnson, CEO of Football Australia, expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming NST competition: 'The introduction of the National Second Tier is a landmark moment for football in Australia. Following productive discussions with our eight foundation clubs and consultation with other stakeholders, we are committed to creating a competition that not only elevates our game but also enriches the football community at all levels. The National Second Tier will provide a new platform for iconic clubs to showcase their talent and connect with fans nationwide.'





# AFC CLUB COMPETITIONS



## MARINERS MAKE HISTORY TO CLINCH AFC CUP™ 2023/24

**On a hot and steamy night at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Oman, the Central Coast Mariners' fairytale that was 2024 grew by another epic chapter with an Arabian night that Australian football will never forget.**

A single goal from substitute Alou Kuol in the 84th minute was enough for the Mariners to win the AFC Cup™ 2023/24 Final by defeating Lebanese club Al Ahed, becoming just the second Australian side to lift continental silverware, and almost a decade after the first to do so.

At the end of an Asian voyage traversing six countries since this campaign began in September 2023, the A-League's smallest club was the beneficiary of \$2.3 million in prize money and memories to last a lifetime.

'I don't think it's sunk in yet,' admitted Mariners' captain Danny Vukovic moments after lifting the AFC Cup on Tuesday 5 May. 'Just the magnitude of it, with all the travel and everything.'

'We knew they would put a lot of men behind the ball, and it was about being patient with the ball – and we were. We scored a great goal through Alou Kuol.'

'Tonight, I had to make a couple of saves but that's just doing my job. It's been a full team effort throughout this tournament, and I think we're deserved winners.'

'It means so much – this club has done so much for me and my family; it's been through some dark times but to see this now and be part of it is just fantastic,' expressed Vukovic.

In front of a clutch of travelling Mariners fans, the team ultimately made light of what was their 40th game of the season to date and a 17-hour economy flight to Oman. They even won the Fair Play Award too, just proving that sometimes nice guys do come first.

Mikael Dorka was named AFC Cup™ 2023/24 Most Valuable Player.

Four days earlier on 1 May, the Mariners claimed the Isuzu UTE A-League Premier's Plate and three weeks later, on 25 May, defeated Melbourne Victory FC 3–1 in the 2024 A-League Men Final at Industree Group Stadium, reinforcing that they truly are 'The Greatest Little Club on Earth'.





# IN MEMORIAM



**VALE STEPHEN LAYBUTT**

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**1977–2024**

**Socceroo cap #444**

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Australian Men's Under-23 Sydney 2000  
Summer Olympics



**VALE STEVE MAXWELL**

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**1965–2024**

**Socceroo cap #339**

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Football South Australia's Hall of Fame  
and Player Life Member  
  
Three-time NSL Champion and two-time  
NSL Cup winner



**VALE RON LORD**

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**1929–2024**

**Hall of Fame inductee**

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Australian international representative,  
1951–1964





## VALE DR SIRI KANNANGARA

**1944–2024**

Hall of Fame inductee

First Australian to serve as a FIFA Medical Committee Member 1999–2006



## VALE JOHAN NEESKENS

**1951–2024**

Socceroos Assistant Coach,  
FIFA World Cup Germany 2006™



## VALE ALAN WESTWATER

**1946–2024**

Socceroo cap #188

Football Australia's Team of the Decade  
(1963–1970)



## VALE IAN KNOP AM

**1949–2024**

Chair of Soccer Australia in early 2000s



## VALE JIMMY ARMSTRONG

**1943–2024**

Hall of Fame inductee

Socceroo cap #229



## VALE GEORGE NEGUS AM

**1942–2024**

Soccer Australia Board Member 1995–1999





# COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1974 SOCCEROOS: HONOURING A PIONEERING LEGACY

The 50th anniversary of the 1974 Soccerroos' FIFA World Cup™ debut was a historic milestone for Australian football.

In 2024, Football Australia led a year-long commemoration to honour the team that paved the way for the Soccerroos' modern era. The 1974 squad was more than just the first Australian team to reach the FIFA World Cup™ – they were pioneers, battling against the odds in an era when football was still finding its footing in the national sporting landscape. Their legacy remains an integral part of the game's development in Australia.





## **The Journey of the 1974 Socceroos**

Under the guidance of the late Rale Rasic OAM, the Socceroos defied expectations by securing their place in the 1974 FIFA World Cup Germany™, a feat achieved through remarkable determination and unity. Drawn into a challenging group against East Germany, West Germany and Chile, the team faced the world's best with a squad primarily made up of part-time footballers, many of whom balanced full-time jobs alongside their sporting careers.

Despite finishing without a goal or a point, their performance was widely respected. They displayed a level of resilience, discipline and courage that laid the foundation for future Australian teams. Their qualification also ignited national pride and began a journey that has since seen Australia evolve into a regular contender on the world stage.

## **A Nation Remembers: 2024 Commemorations**

To honour the 1974 Socceroos, Football Australia orchestrated a wide-ranging 50th anniversary celebration, ensuring that their legacy was shared with the football community and future generations. These initiatives spanned several platforms, creating an immersive tribute that went beyond mere recognition, reinforcing the significance of this milestone anniversary.

## **The 50-Year Gala: A Day of Honour**

A special gala event was held on Friday 14 June 2024 at the Strangers' Room, NSW Parliament House, hosted by the Hon. Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Sport. This prestigious gathering brought together surviving members of the 1974 squad, current Socceroos, and key figures in Australian football to commemorate the historic milestone. The event provided a platform for players, coaches and football luminaries to reflect on the legacy of the 1974 Socceroos, celebrating their pioneering achievement on the world stage. It also served as an opportunity for younger generations of players and fans to honour and draw inspiration from the team that paved the way for Australian football's continued growth and success.

Speeches from key figures, including Football Australia executives, National Team players and government officials, highlighted the lasting impact of the 1974 Socceroos. Video tributes showcased personal stories from the players, detailing the challenges they faced, the camaraderie that defined their journey, and the pride they felt representing Australia on football's biggest stage.

## **Documentary Series: Telling the Untold Stories**

Featuring previously unseen footage, exclusive interviews with the players and an expert analysis of how the 1974 campaign shaped Australian football, this documentary provides deep insights into the squad's preparation, the realities of being a footballer in the 1970s, and the impact their qualification had on the sport's development in Australia.

This initiative aims to educate and inspire young footballers and fans, ensuring that the 1974 team's story remains a crucial part of Australian football history.

## **Digital Archive & Storytelling Platform**

A dedicated online hub has been created on the Socceroos' official website, featuring archival footage, in-depth stories and exclusive interviews. This ensures that future generations can access and learn from the 1974 Socceroos' journey. The initiative reinforces the importance of storytelling in preserving Australia's football heritage and fosters a deeper appreciation for the game's pioneers.



## **The Lasting Legacy of the 1974 Socceroos**

Beyond the celebrations, the 1974 Socceroos' legacy continues to shape Australian football. Their achievement proved that Australian teams could compete on the global stage, a belief that has been carried forward by every subsequent Socceroos generation.

This 50-year commemoration was not just about remembering that feat: it was about recognising the long-term impact of the Socceroos' achievement on the sport's trajectory. The players of 1974 helped establish a footballing identity in Australia, setting the foundations for the development of professional pathways, improved grassroots infrastructure and greater international recognition for the Socceroos. More than just a commemoration, it was a celebration of perseverance, national pride and the evolution of Australian football, ensuring that the 1974 Socceroos' pioneering spirit continues to inspire current and future generations, reinforcing the message that resilience, determination and unity are at the heart of the national team's journey.

Through a carefully curated series of events, Football Australia paid homage to the pioneers who laid the foundations for the Socceroos' success, while ensuring that the Socceroos' story remains a permanent part of Australia's football heritage. As the game continues to

grow, the legacy of the 1974 Socceroos will always stand as a reminder of the challenges overcome, the progress made, and the bright future that lies ahead for Australian football.

The 1974 Socceroos squad that represented Australia at the 1974 FIFA World Cup Germany™ was:

### **TEAM OFFICIALS**

Rale RASIC OAM (Vale) – Head Coach  
Les SCHEINFLUG – Assistant Coach  
Brian CORRIGAN (Vale) – Team Doctor  
Peter VAN RYN – Physio/Gear Steward

### **Goalkeepers**

Allan MAHER  
Jim MILISAVLJEVIC (Vale)  
Jack REILLY

### **Defenders**

Colin CURRAN  
Ivo RUDIC  
Manfred SCHAEFER (Vale)  
Doug UTJESENOVIC  
John WATKISS  
Harry WILLIAMS

Peter WILSON

### **Midfielders**

Dave HARDING  
Jimmy MACKAY (Vale)  
Raymond RICHARDS  
Jimmy ROONEY  
Max TOLSON

### **Attackers**

Attila ABONYI (Vale)  
Adrian ALSTON  
Branko BULJEVIC  
Ernie CAMPBELL  
Garry MANUEL  
Peter OLLERTON  
Johnny WARREN (Vale)

### **Extended Squad Members**

Ron CORRY  
Jimmy FRASER  
Ray BAARTZ  
Billy VOJTEK  
Bobby HOGG







# THE 'FIRST MATILDAS'



## HISTORIC RECOGNITION OF THE 1975 AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM AS THE 'FIRST MATILDAS'

**In 2024, Football Australia proudly recognised the 1975 Australian Women's National Team as the 'First Matildas', marking a defining moment in the history of women's football in our nation.**

This milestone honours the pioneering team that represented Australia at the 1975 Asian Ladies Football Confederation (ALFC) tournament in Hong Kong – the first international competition for an Australian women's National Team. The formal recognition ensures these trailblazing women are now rightfully acknowledged alongside the 1922 men's team, the 'First Socceroos', as foundational figures in the sport's national identity.

The decision follows a comprehensive review by a dedicated working group led by Football Australia Chairman, Anter Isaac, and including Deputy Chair Jaclyn Lee-Joe and Director Spiro Pappas. The group collaborated with respected international experts,

including Dr Kevin Tallec Marston (International Centre for Sports Studies) and Omar Ongaro (former Chair, FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber), to develop a robust set of criteria for historical recognition.

### The criteria assessed key elements such as:

- Governing body sanctioning: Matches were formally organised or endorsed by recognised football authorities.
- International representation: Fixtures were contested against other officially recognised national teams.
- National insignia and uniform: Players wore the Australian green and gold, including the Coat of Arms.
- Eligibility: Team members were eligible to represent Australia on the international stage.
- Historical continuity: The team demonstrated clear links to the modern National Team program.
- Public perception and media recognition: The team was publicly acknowledged as a national representative side at the time.

The review concluded that the 1975 team met all the required criteria for A International status.

To formally honour their legacy, Football Australia awarded each player from the 1975 squad an official 'A' International cap numbered '01', acknowledging them as the 'First Matildas'. This recognition is not only symbolic – it establishes these women as foundational figures in Australian football and redefines the historical narrative of the national women's team.







‘This recognition is long overdue and a testament to the pioneering spirit of the women who paved the way for future generations of female footballers,’ said Anter Isaac, Chairman of Football Australia.

‘The 1975 team’s achievements laid the foundation for the development and success of women’s football in our country, and it is our honour to formally acknowledge their contributions.’

Captain of the 1975 team, Pat O’Connor, welcomed the announcement with pride: ‘I am deeply honoured and thrilled by Football Australia’s decision. This acknowledgement cements our place in Australian football history as the pioneers of the women’s game. It is a moment of immense pride for all of us.’

**The 1975 team also included several historic firsts:**

- First Women’s National Team Coach: Joe O’Connor
- First Indigenous Matilda: Aunty Tarita Yvonne Peters (Stacey Tracy)
- First Women’s National Team Captain: Pat O’Connor

**Recognised members of the ‘First Matildas’ – 1975 Australian Women’s National Team:**

Pat O’Connor (Captain), Christel Abenthum, Sue Binns, Kim Coates, Julie Dolan, Lynn Everett Miller, Trudy Fischer, Cindy Heydon, Vickie Kohen, Sue Larsen, Lynn McKenzie (gk), Aunty Tarita Yvonne Peters (Stacey Tracy), Connie Selby, Trixie Tagg, Sue Taylor (gk), Gundega ‘Gundy’ Zarins. Coach: Joe O’Connor

This initiative forms part of Football Australia’s broader commitment to preserving, celebrating and elevating the legacy of those who have shaped the game. It ensures future generations understand and honour the foundations on which today’s success is built.



# CELEBRATING A LEGACY: 25 YEARS OF THE 1999 JOEYS' REMARKABLE JOURNEY

During the Asian Qualifiers Round 3 in Melbourne on Thursday 14 November 2024, Football Australia proudly commemorated one of the most defining chapters in our nation's football history. The clash between the Subway Socceroos and Saudi Arabia provided an inspiring backdrop to honour the enduring legacy of the 1999 Joeys – the Australian U17 Men's National Team whose remarkable journey continues to influence our National Teams and ignite the passion of fans across the country.

## A Historic Campaign Remembered

Twenty-five years ago, the Australian U17 Men's National Team achieved an unprecedented feat at the FIFA U-17 World Championship 1999™ held in New Zealand. Under the visionary guidance of Head Coach, Les Scheinflug, the Joeys embarked on a rollercoaster journey defined by dramatic highs and challenging lows:

- **Early Trials:** The campaign began with a hard-fought 2–1 defeat to Brazil. Facing the very real threat of elimination, the team bounced back spectacularly, registering a 2–1 victory over European giants Germany and then edging out Mali 1–0, to not only progress from the group, but to top it.

- **Knockout Brilliance:** A decisive 1–0 win over Qatar in the Quarter-Finals set the stage for a thrilling Semi-Final against the USA. In a nail-biting encounter that ended 2–2, the Joeys clinched their spot in the Final by winning 7–6 in a tense penalty shootout after drawing 2–2.
- **A Nail-Biting Finale:** In the Final, the Joeys once again faced Brazil. After a goalless 90 minutes and extra time, the match was decided by penalties. In an agonising shootout, the Joeys fell just short, losing 8–7, a result that despite its heartbreak, underscored their exceptional unity, resilience and technical prowess.

Emerging Socceroos talents, such as Josh Kennedy and Scott McDonald, featured prominently during this historic campaign, adding to the rich tapestry of Australian football history.



## Reflections From the Trailblazers

To celebrate the phenomenal achievements of that iconic 1999 Joeys side, Football Australia recently captured reflections from four of the key figures behind the team: Head Coach Les Scheinflug, captain Mark Byrnes, goalkeeper Jess Vanstrattan, and forward Scott McDonald.

- **Head Coach Les Scheinflug**

Celebrated as a true pioneer, Scheinflug described the campaign as ‘the greatest achievement in football.’ He highlighted the tactical resilience of the team, the importance of rigorous penalty shootout preparation, and his coaching philosophy based on respect, discipline and unity. Even with limited resources, his methods forged a team that overcame formidable challenges – a legacy that continues to inspire Australian football today.

- **Captain Mark Byrnes**

Reflecting on the arduous qualification process through Oceania and Asia, Byrnes recalled a critical month of preparation in South America that equipped the team for a challenging ‘group of death’ featuring Brazil, Germany and Mali. Despite early setbacks and the emotional weight of a missed penalty in the Final, his memories are filled with pride and fondness for a campaign that has had a lasting, life-changing impact.

- **Goalkeeper Jess Vanstrattan**

Vanstrattan recounted his personal journey through the tournament, including a turning point when an injury before the opening match almost derailed his FIFA U-17 World Championship debut. Determined not to miss the opportunity, he played through the pain and made crucial saves throughout the campaign. His heroic performances in penalty shootouts – especially in the Semi-Final against the USA and the Final against Brazil – are remembered as defining moments, even if the ultimate loss still resonates 25 years later.

- **Forward Scott McDonald**

As the youngest member of the squad, McDonald’s rise was both unexpected and inspirational. Initially a late bloomer, his impressive performances earned him a starting role. He fondly recalls scoring a memorable goal in the Semi-Final against the USA and the bittersweet emotions of the Final against Brazil. His reflections emphasise the discipline, innovative training methods and the strong bond within the team – elements that not only shaped his career but also continue to influence Australian football.

## Australian U-17 Men’s National Team 1999 Squad

The legacy of the 1999 Joeys is also carried by the remarkable group of players and staff who made that campaign unforgettable:

**Player Name**

Mark BYRNES

Louis BRAIN

Shane CANSDELL-SHERRIFF

Joe DI IORIO

Anthony DOUMANIS

Iain FYFE

Aaron GOULDING

Bradley GROVES

James JOHNSON

Josh KENNEDY

Shane LOCKHART

Dylan MACALLISTER

Adrian MADASCHI

Jade NORTH

Scott MCDONALD

Lucas PANTELIS

Matthew PELIZZARI

Wayne SRHOJ

Jess VANSTRATTEN

**Team Officials**

Les SCHEINFLUG, Head Coach

Kelly CROSS, Assistant Coach

James CROCKER, Team Administrator

Orazio (Raz) DICARLO, Equipment Manager

Peter GRAY

Charlie JURISIC

Steve O’CONNOR

Doctor Joseph TERMINELLO







# HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2024: HONOURING OUR LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

**Football Australia celebrated the induction of four extraordinary individuals into the Football Australia Hall of Fame, at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane during the 2024 CommBank Matildas' match against Brazil.**

This landmark event not only recognised personal achievement but also honoured contributions that have fundamentally shaped Australian football over decades. In his foreword, Chairman Anter Isaac stated 'It is with immense pride that we celebrate the induction of four outstanding individuals into the Football Australia Hall of Fame. These inductees have left a lasting mark on the sport and their influence will endure for generations.'

This year's honourees – Jenny Bray, Craig Foster AM, Ian Holmes, and the late Alex Pongrass AM – were selected through a rigorous, transparent process that began with public nominations. A panel of distinguished Australian football historians reviewed the nominations and presented their recommendations to the Football Australia Board. After thoughtful deliberation, the Board ratified the choices, confident that each inductee epitomised the core values of dedication, integrity and an unwavering love for the game.







## Jenny Bray: A Trailblazer for Women in Football Officiating

Jenny Bray has devoted 40 years of her life to transforming the landscape of football refereeing and making the profession more accessible to women. Her distinguished career began in

1984 with the St George Football Referees Association, where her passion for the game and commitment to excellence quickly became apparent. As she advanced to the NSW state league level, Jenny's hard work and focus on continuous improvement paved the way for her historic appointment as Australia's first female FIFA referee in 1995 – a milestone that set the stage for generations of female officials.

In 1998, recognising her extensive knowledge and leadership, Jenny shifted her focus to referee coaching and assessing for the national governing body. Her efforts in nurturing talent and promoting high standards in officiating were further acknowledged in 2000, when she was awarded the Australian Sports Medal. In 2006, Jenny embraced a new challenge by moving to Malaysia to serve as a development officer for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). In this role, she mentored and supported female referees, guiding many from the national level to achieving FIFA international standards, with several progressing to referee at the FIFA World Cup™.

Today, Jenny continues to contribute at the grassroots level as the Director of Coaching with the St George Football Referees Association and remains an active AFC Referee Assessor. Her enduring legacy is not only reflected in her personal achievements, but also in the vibrant community of female referees she has helped foster across Australia and beyond.



## Craig Foster AM: A Multifaceted Advocate for Change

Craig Foster AM's impact on Australian football and society is profound and multifaceted. His journey in the sport began as a player, representing Australia in the inaugural 1985 FIFA U-16 World Championship. Going on to earn 29 caps as Socceroo cap #419, Craig also had the honour of leading the

National Team as its 40th captain. Yet, it is his post-playing career that has truly amplified his influence.

Craig's transition from player to broadcaster saw him become one of football's most passionate commentators. His heartfelt and incisive commentary during the Socceroos' 2005 FIFA World Cup™ Qualifier against Uruguay, broadcast on SBS, remains emblematic of his deep commitment to the game. Over a distinguished 20-year broadcasting career, Craig has provided in-depth analysis and promoted football literacy across men's and women's FIFA World Cups™, Olympic Games, and the UEFA Champions League.

Beyond the microphone, Craig has emerged as a powerful advocate for social justice. He has championed the use of football as a platform to promote multiculturalism, human rights and community inclusion. A former NSW Australian of the Year and a Life Member of Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) – where he served as both CEO and Chair – Craig's leadership is further evidenced by his patronage of Indigenous representative teams and his success in leading youth teams to national championships in NSW. His global advocacy work, notably through initiatives such as the #SaveHakeem campaign, underscores his unwavering dedication to justice and equality.



## Ian Holmes: A Visionary Administrator and Mentor

With a career spanning approximately 50 years, Ian Holmes has been an influential force in every facet of Australian football. His journey in the sport began at the grassroots level with the Belmore Police Citizens Youth Club in Sydney, where he quickly demonstrated leadership and a passion

for administration. At just 19 years old, he became the youngest-ever President of the Canterbury District Association in 1975 – a sign of the remarkable contributions he would continue to make.

At 25, Ian's expertise was recognised when he was elected President of the NSW Amateur Soccer Federation, the largest federation in Australia. In 1985, he further cemented his legacy by joining the board of the NSW Soccer Federation. As the landscape of football evolved, Holmes was at the forefront of necessary reforms. He served as the General Manager of the NSW Soccer Federation from 1987 to 1991, and then as CEO and Commissioner of the Australian Soccer Federation from 1991 to 1995. His leadership during these transformative years was pivotal in modernising the administration and governance of the sport.

In subsequent years, Ian held key positions as General Manager at the NSW Amateur Soccer Federation (1998–1999), Soccer Australia (1999–2002), and Football NSW (2007–2011), before returning to his roots at Canterbury. On the national stage, his visionary work saw him take responsibility for delivering major events such as the 1988 Bicentennial Gold Cup and the FIFA World Youth Championship Australia 1993™. Ian's commitment to securing millions of dollars in grants from federal, state and local governments, for infrastructure development, has laid a robust foundation for the future growth and success of Australian football. His leadership and mentorship have guided the sport through both its challenges and triumphs, ensuring that his impact resonates across generations.





## Alex Pongrass AM: A Pioneering Visionary

Alex Pongrass AM (1923–2000) was a towering figure in Australian football whose pioneering spirit and visionary leadership forever transformed the sport. As the founding Chairman of the National Soccer League (NSL), Alex played an instrumental role in establishing Australia's first national football competition. His tenure as President of St George-Budapest Football Club spanned over 40 years, during which he left an indelible mark on the club and the wider football community.

Under Alex's leadership, the St George-Budapest Football Club became a powerhouse, winning the NSL in 1983 along with several state titles. His eye for talent and his dedication to the sport were evident in his recruitment of iconic figures such as Johnny Warren, Rale Rasic OAM, and Frank Arok AM – individuals who themselves would go on to shape the future of Australian football. Beyond on-field success, Alex was passionate about infrastructure development. His vision led to the creation of the St George Stadium, a venue that has since become a key site for both local and international matches.

In recognition of his vast contributions, Alex Pongrass was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1988 for Services to Soccer. Despite facing numerous personal challenges throughout his life, his relentless drive and commitment to football set the stage for the modern era of the sport in Australia. His legacy continues to inspire, serving as a benchmark for innovation, leadership and resilience.

## A Lasting Tribute to Excellence

The induction of these four luminaries into the Football Australia Hall of Fame is a fitting tribute to their enduring legacies. Their careers span a broad spectrum of roles – from groundbreaking officiating and inspiring commentary to transformative administration and visionary leadership. Each of these inductees has not only elevated their respective fields within the sport but has also contributed to the growth, inclusivity and global appeal of Australian football.

Chairman Anter Isaac and CEO James Johnson both reflected on the significance of this year's inductions, emphasising that these achievements are not merely historical milestones but also sources of inspiration for the future. They noted, 'Each of these honourees embodies the core values of football in Australia – dedication, integrity and an unwavering love for the game. Their extraordinary contributions have not only shaped our sport but have also united communities and inspired countless individuals to pursue excellence both on and off the field.'

As Football Australia continues to build its national iconic brands and drive innovative strategies in the sporting arena, the legacies of Jenny Bray, Craig Foster AM, Ian Holmes, and Alex Pongrass AM will undoubtedly serve as guiding lights. Their stories remind us that the spirit of football transcends individual achievements – it is a shared journey marked by passion, perseverance and a collective commitment to excellence.

The Hall of Fame Class of 2024 stands as a testament to what can be achieved when talent, vision and relentless dedication converge. Their enduring impact on Australian football is a beacon for current and future generations, inspiring us to nurture the next wave of trailblazers who will continue to elevate this beautiful game.

In celebrating these legends, Football Australia reaffirms its commitment to honouring the past while paving the way for a future where football remains a powerful force for unity, innovation and societal progress. The legacy of these inductees will forever be interwoven with the fabric of Australian football, ensuring that their remarkable contributions continue to inspire and resonate for generations to come.







# HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

## 2024 (4)

- Jenny Bray
- Craig Foster AM
- Ian Holmes
- Alex Pongrass AM

## 2022 (6)

- Moya Dodd AO
- Collette Gardiner (nee McCallum)
- Walter Pless
- Ange Postecoglou
- Brendan Schwab
- Ted Smith

## 2021 (4)

- Heather Garriock
- Kathryn Gill
- Joseph Huxley Honeysett
- Mark Schwarzer OAM

## 2019 (4)

- Leigh Wardell
- Harry Kewell
- Branko Culina
- Sir Frank Lowy AC

## 2018 (3)

- Sonia Gegenhuber
- Mark Bresciano
- Andrew Dettre

## 2016 (3)

- Tammy Ogston
- Peter Raskopoulos
- Sacha Wainwright

## 2015 (2)

- Lisa Casagrande
- John Moriarty

## 2014 (5)

- Sandra Brentnall
- Stefan Kamasz

- Damian Mori
- Tom Sermanni
- Mark Viduka

## 2013 (2)

- James Fraser
- Linda Hughes

## 2012 (3)

- Alison Forman
- Scott Chipperfield
- Alan Vessey

## 2011 (4)

- Craig Moore
- Dianne Alagich
- Ted Simmons
- Mike Cockerill

## 2010 (5)

- Ned Zelic
- Joanne Peters
- Stan Lazaridis

- Martyn Crook
- Mark Shield

## 2009 (5)

- Tony Vidmar
- Cheryl Salisbury
- Paul Okon
- John Economos
- Sam Vella

## 2008 (11)

- Tracey Wheeler
- George Keith
- Cliff Almond
- Julie Murray
- Aurelio Vidmar
- Mike Wells
- George Dick OAM
- Donato Di Fabrizio OAM
- John De Witt
- Peter Desira
- John Thomson

## 2007 (9)

- Alex Tobin OAM
- Terry Greedy
- Steve Blair
- Anissa Tan
- Eddie Lennie
- Heather Reid AM
- John Barclay
- Ted Rowley
- Trixie Tagg

## 2006 (9)

- David Mitchell
- Charlie Stewart
- Peter Sharne
- Ernie Campbell
- Robert Zabica
- Fred Villiers
- Raul Blanco
- Andre Kruger
- Ray Sandell

## 2005 (11)

- Mike Petersen
- Robbie Slater
- Allan Maher
- Alec Cameron
- Craig Johnston
- Bruce Morrow
- Roger Lamb
- Vic Dalglish
- Harry Hetherington
- Phil Murphy
- Gary Wilkins

## 2004 (11)

- Graham Arnold
- Jack Hughes
- Jack Reilly
- Todd Clarke
- Ian Gray
- Sue Monteath
- Peter Thorne
- Jane Oakley





- Roy Druery
- Gordon Dunster
- Fred Hutchison

## 2003 (18)

- Wally Savor
- Percy Lennard
- William "Bill" Henderson
- Milan Ivanovic
- Colin Bennett
- Gary Cole
- Steve O'Connor
- Roy Crowhurst
- Theresa Deas
- David Harding
- Betty Hoar
- Les Murray
- Peter Gray
- Ken Allen
- Vito Cilauro
- Denis Harlow
- Joseph J Honeysett
- Peter Van Ryn

## 2002 (15)

- James Wilkinson
- Cindy Heydon
- George Harris
- Branko Buljevic
- Stan Ackerley

- Peter Ollerton
- Joanne Millman
- Norman Conquest
- Fred Robins
- Eddie Thomson
- George Vasilopoulos
- Allan Crisp
- Siri Kannangara
- Dennis McDermott
- Rodney Woods

## 2001 (24)

- Bill Vojtek
- Cecil Drummond
- Alan Davidson
- Frank Farina OAM
- Tony Henderson
- Pat O'Connor
- David Ratcliffe
- Jim Tansey
- Leo Baumgartner
- Gary Byrne
- Robert Dunn
- Ken Murphy
- John Constantine
- Basil Scarsella
- Charles Caruso
- Doug Rennie
- Bill Vrolyks
- George Wallace

- Les Broadbent
- Sid Grant
- Eric Heath
- Bob McShane
- Arthur Roberts
- Bill Turner

## 2000 (19)

- Adrian Alston
- Eddie Krncevic
- Paul Wade
- Oscar Crino
- Doug Utjesenovic
- Murray Barnes
- Ron Corry
- Alex Gibb
- Kevin O'Neill
- Joe Watson
- Chris Bambridge
- Les Scheinflug
- Don Sutherland
- Charles Valentine
- Barry Bainbridge
- Jim Connell
- Charles Perkins
- Emmanuel Poulakakis
- John Taylor

## 1999 – Inaugural induction (84)

- George Smith
- Cliff Sander
- John Perin
- Frank Parsons
- Jeff Olver
- Gordon Nunn
- Sergio Melta
- Gary Marocchi
- Allan Johns
- Tom Jack
- William 'Bill' Henderson OAM
- Jack Evans
- Michael de Bruyckere
- William Coolahan
- Jim Armstrong
- Ron Adair
- John Watkiss
- Ray Richards
- Graham Jennings
- Col Curran
- Charlie Yankos
- Harry Williams
- Manfred Schaefer
- John Nyskohus
- James McNabb
- William Maunder
- Jimmy Mackay
- Frank Loughran
- Bob Lawrie
- Julie Dolan
- Ray Baartz
- Peter Wilson
- Johnny Warren, MBE
- Jim Rooney
- Alf Quill
- James 'Judy' Masters
- Joe Marston MBE
- Ron Lord
- John Kosmina
- Reg Date
- Bob Bignell
- Attila Abonyi
- Ron Wright
- Sir William Walkley
- Joe Vlasits
- William Thomas
- Ron Smith
- Martin Royal
- Peter Nikolich
- Des Miles
- Graham McMillan
- Frank McIver
- Zoran Matic
- Jack Logan
- Brian Lefevre
- Tony Kovac OAM
- Tom Grimson
- Keith Gilmour
- Pam Gilbert
- Harry Croft
- Donald Campbell
- Fred Barlow
- Eric Worthington
- Laurie Schwab
- Les Scheinflug
- Julius Re
- Sam Papasavas OAM
- Dieter Klose
- Brian Corrigan
- Ian Brusasco AM
- Giacomo 'Jim' Bayutti OAM
- Frank Arok AM
- Michael Weinstein AM, BEM
- Elaine Watson OAM
- Vic Tuting MBE
- Robert Telfer
- Rale Rasic OAM
- Theo Maramaris MBE
- Arthur Gibbs
- John Walter Fletcher
- Harry Dockerty
- Tony Boskovic
- Connie Selby
- Sir Arthur George AO





# AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



**In March 2024, Football Australia hosted the inaugural Australian Football Leadership Summit, a defining initiative aimed at strengthening leadership across all levels of the game and fostering a united, forward-looking football community.**

Held over two days at the Hyatt Regency Sydney, the summit brought together more than 100 of the sport's most respected leaders from across – Member Federations, A-League clubs, Professional Footballers Australia, Women's Football Council, National Team coaches and Football Australia's executive team. Football Australia was also honoured to welcome international guests from FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC).

## **A transformational approach to leadership**

More than a conference, the summit represented a strategic shift – moving beyond day-to-day operations to explore the philosophical, cultural and human dimensions of leadership in football.

The event was designed around three foundational objectives:

- enhancing personal leadership effectiveness
- building stronger, values-aligned teams
- creating resilient, high-performing organisations.

Guided by the globally acclaimed **Prof Boris Groysberg** of Harvard Business School, attendees engaged with powerful case studies – including the journeys of Dirk Nowitzki, Domino's Pizza and Michael Phelps – to explore decision-making under pressure, leadership in adversity, and organisational excellence.

Complementing this was a series of compelling sessions led by **Oscar Trimboli**, who introduced leaders to the power of deep listening as a tool to build trust, alignment and psychological safety within teams and organisations.

## **Enduring impact and follow-through**

The summit did not end in the room. As part of Football Australia's commitment to embedding a culture of continuous improvement, it launched a follow-up program of **quarterly virtual leadership development sessions**, ensuring sustained engagement with the principles introduced during the summit.

These sessions – featuring both Prof Groysberg and Oscar Trimboli – have helped keep leadership front-of-mind across the football ecosystem, deepening the shared learning journey and reinforcing collaboration between Football Australia and its partners.

A highlight of the event was the **Leadership Dinner at Café del Mar**, which offered a relaxed forum to foster relationships and community among senior leaders – a valuable component of leadership development often overlooked in formal settings.





## What we heard from leaders

Post-summit feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

- 96% of attendees rated the experience as 'extremely valuable'
- 94% said the event positively influenced their leadership approach
- many called for the Summit to become a **regular feature** of Australian football's leadership calendar.

Participants praised the unique blend of world-class content, cross-sector dialogue, and the opportunity to step back from operational demands to reflect on deeper leadership challenges and opportunities.

## Laying foundations for the future

The Australian Football Leadership Summit 2024 set a new benchmark for leadership development in Australian sport. It demonstrated what is possible when we bring together our most committed people, challenge conventional thinking, and invest in leadership as a driver of long-term cultural and organisational success.

Plans are now in motion for a **second edition of the summit in 2025**, building on the momentum of this foundational experience and expanding the leadership dialogue even further.

Looking to the future, Football Australia remains committed to fostering a united, inspired and high-performing leadership community – because the future of football will be shaped by the quality of its leaders.





# BOARD COMMITTEES

Committee	Director Members	External Members	Football Australia Staff
<b>Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC)</b>	Joseph Carrozzi AM (Chair) Anter Isaac Spiro Pappas	Ernst & Young representatives	James Johnson Mark Falvo <i>(replaced by Caroline Veitch from August 2024)</i> Mel Mallam Stuart Corbishley (Secretary)
<b>Football Development Committee (FDC)</b>	Heather Garriock (Chair) Sam Ciccarello <i>(from 26 June 2024)</i> Amy Duggan <i>(until 28 May 2024)</i> Mark Bresciano <i>(until 28 May 2024)</i>	Mark Schwarzer <i>(from 14 October 2024)</i> Dianne Alagich <i>(from 14 October 2024)</i> Anthony Crea <i>(from 14 October 2024)</i>	James Johnson Ernie Merrick Paddy Steinfort <i>(until August 2023)</i> James Duvcevski <i>(since August 2023)</i> Natalie Lutz (Secretary)
<b>Referees Committee</b>	N/A	Ray Olivier (Chair) Graham Scott Allyson Flynn Nia Southwell Jim Oularis Adam Fielding Eleanor Hayes Trent McClenahan	Nathan Magill <i>(replaced by John Moss from October 2024)</i> Mathew Cheeseman <i>(until August 2024)</i> Lorenzo Crepaldi <i>(from September 2024)</i> (Secretary)

## CONGRESS STANDING COMMITTEES

Committee	Director Members	External Members	Football Australia Staff
<b>Nominations Standing Committee</b>	Spiro Pappas (Chair)	Gino Marra Stuart Kenny Beau Bush Janette Spencer	Stuart Corbishley (Secretary)
<b>Finance and Risk Standing Committee</b>	Joseph Carrozzi (Chair) Anter Isaac	Sherif Andrawes Simon Pearce Tim Pullman Gilbert Lorquet	Mark Falvo <i>(replaced by Caroline Veitch from August 2024)</i> (Secretary) Mel Mallam
<b>Women’s Football Council Standing Committee</b>	N/A	Dr Deidre Anderson AM (Chair) <i>(commenced 4 June 2024, replacing Leigh Russell)</i> Helena Dorczak <i>(resigned 8 October 2024)</i> John Sugunananthan Jada Whyman <i>(commenced 13 February 2024, replacing Ally Green)</i> Fran Sankey <i>(commenced 8 May 2024, replacing Joanne Smith)</i> Erin Clout Nikki Drost <i>(commenced 26 June 2024, replacing Caroline Carnegie)</i> Gabriela Garton <i>(commenced 4 June 2024, replacing Elise Kellond-Knight)</i> Selina Holtze <i>(commenced 4 June 2024, replacing Janette Spencer)</i> Alyssar Narey <i>(commenced 4 June 2024, replacing Damaris Treasure)</i>	Carlee Millikin Charlotte Olsen <i>(from August 2024)</i> (Secretary)
<b>National Indigenous Advisory Group</b>		Kenny Bedford (Chair) Belinda Duarte Tanya Oxtoby Selina Holtze	Courtney Fewquandie





# FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



**MR ANTER ISAAC**

## **Chairman**

Mr Isaac was elected to the Football Australia Board in November 2022 and was elected as Chair at the Board meeting held immediately after the 2023 AGM on 22 November 2023. Mr Isaac has been involved in Australian football for 27 years, starting as an assistant accountant with the national governing body in 1996, where he worked for 11 years until 2007. During his time at the national governing body, Mr Isaac held the roles of Head of Finance, Company Secretary, NSL and A-League Finance Manager, and various roles in National Teams management. In 2007, Mr Isaac established a sports strategy consulting firm, Kleinmann Wang, which has since consulted to and supported projects to improve governance and leadership systems in Federations (UC); develop professional leagues and clubs; and design and deliver strategy in more than 120 countries, in conjunction with FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation, the Oceania Football Confederation, FIBA (International Basketball Federation), and the International Cricket Council. Most recently, Mr Isaac was the President of Football NSW, where he was also a director between 2013 and 2021. Mr Isaac has been a director of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs in the NRL, and continues to serve on the board of the Beverly Hills Film Festival.



**MS JACLYN LEE-JOE**

## **Deputy Chair**

Ms Lee-Joe was elected to the Football Australia Board in November 2022. Ms Lee-Joe has over 20 years of marketing, digital disruption and transformation experience across media, tech, communications and financial services. She has worked in a myriad of global and regional roles around the world with some truly impactful brands such as BBC, Netflix, Skype, Virgin and Afterpay. As Global Director of Audience Marketing, Entertainment Partnerships and Broadcast Media, she was responsible for Skype's campaign platforms, growing the entertainment partnership program and building Skype's capability and presence in the broadcast space. At BBC Studios, Ms Lee-Joe had oversight of more than 300 brands globally, fostering franchise brands such as Doctor Who, the Planet Series, Top Gear and growing new brands such as Bluey. Ms Lee-Joe was instrumental in helping to create new digital ways for communities to engage with BBC content globally. At Netflix, as Global Chief Marketing Officer, Ms Lee-Joe brought her experience in media and entertainment together with her understanding of product and tech – building reach and fan engagement for a growing international content slate across an expanding range of genres, deepening partnerships, leading popular culture by fostering conversations around the world, and developing Netflix's brand. Since returning to Australia, Ms Lee-Joe is an advisor and board member to some of the leaders in the entrepreneur and innovation ecosystem. As Global Head of Customer, Content & Marketing at Money by Afterpay, she led product design, content and marketing teams to create a new OTT money experience focused on Gen Z and Millennials.



**MR JOSEPH CARROZZI AM**

## **Director**

Mr Carrozzi AM was first elected to the Football Australia Board in November 2018 and is the Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and the Football Congress Finance and Risk Committee. Mr Carrozzi AM is a business adviser and board member on a number of public and private sector boards. He is President of the NSW Business Chamber; Chair of ASX-listed HealthCo Healthcare & Wellness REIT and DigiCo Infrastructure REIT; Chair of Angus Knight Group, an employment services business; and Chair of the Centenary Institute of Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology. Mr Carrozzi AM holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws from the University of NSW and is admitted as a Barrister at Law in the Supreme Court of NSW. He has worked in the professional services sector for 30 years, including 15 years as a Managing Partner. Mr Carrozzi AM is a Fellow of the Tax Institute of Australia (FTI) and a Member of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. Mr Carrozzi AM has had an involvement in sports governance for over 20 years with roles on the boards of NSWIS (New South Wales Institute of Sport), Athletics Australia, the AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015 and the GWS Giants AFL club.



# FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



**MRS AMY DUGGAN**

**Director**

***Resigned: 28 May 2024***

Mrs Duggan was first elected to the Football Australia Board on 1 October 2019 and became an Elected Director in 2021. Mrs Duggan was a member and the Chair of the Football Development Committee. Mrs Duggan has 25 years' experience in various roles in football and is a former Matilda. Mrs Duggan holds a bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Wollongong and serves on several committees and sports boards, including NSW Government agency, Venues NSW. A communications and broadcast professional, Mrs Duggan is a journalist and presenter for ABC. Having worked in the media industry for 20 years, Mrs Duggan is especially fond of her time covering the Matildas, Socceroos, the W-League (now A-League Women) and the FIFA Women's World Cup™.



**MS CATRIONA NOBLE**

**Director**

Ms Noble was first elected to the Football Australia Board in September 2021. Most recently Executive General Manager Retail at Australia Post, Ms Noble's career has seen her lead significant growth and major restructures at some of Australia's largest organisations, including ANZ Bank and McDonald's. During her time with ANZ, Ms Noble was responsible for key retail distribution channels to customers including the Australian Branch Network. Ms Noble's 20-year career with McDonald's saw her play an integral role in the transformation of the McDonald's brand in Australia, holding various positions, including CEO and Managing Director for McDonald's Australia and Chair of Ronald McDonald House Charities. Ms Noble has completed the Advanced Management Programme (AMP) at INSEAD's business school, Fontainebleau; an MBA in Strategy & Business at Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM); the MIT Boston Digital Business Transformation Program. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**MS HEATHER GARRIOCK**

**Director**

Ms Garriock was first elected to the Football Australia Board in September 2021. She has spent over 25 years in football with various roles across all levels of the game. Ms Garriock is one of the most decorated CommBank Matildas in history with appearances at three FIFA Women's World Cups™, three AFC Women's Asian Cups, two Olympic Games and a national championship in the W-League. With a Master of Education (Sports Coaching) from Sydney University and an AFC A Licence, Ms Garriock has held coaching positions at National Premier Leagues, W-League and CommBank Matildas' level, as well as an appointment as the Vice President of Football Coaches Australia. Ms Garriock has been inducted into the Football Australia Hall of Fame. Ms Garriock is a member of the AFC Technical Committee and the World Taekwondo Sustainability Committee, and is a Board Director of Confederation of Australian Sport. Ms Garriock has undertaken an AICD Foundations of Directorship™ program as well as being elected Vice President. Ms Garriock has been a television commentator and analyst for several broadcasters and held other senior executive sports management positions.



**MR SPIRO PAPPAS**

**Director**

Mr Pappas was first elected to the Football Australia Board in June 2022 and is a senior executive with over 30 years of international business experience. He is currently the Chair of Atlas Iron and Open Learning (ASX listed), and a non-executive director of Cognian Technologies. Prior to his current board roles, Mr Pappas had a long career in banking, serving at NAB in a number of senior leadership roles, including CEO NAB's Asian operations (based in Singapore), and was responsible for all of NAB's international operations and the Global Institutional Bank. Prior to NAB, Mr Pappas worked for Deutsche Bank in London and New York, and then with ABN AMRO Bank in London. Mr Pappas has participated in a number of G20 forums as a member of the B20 Australia Taskforce. He was a corporate board member of the Australia Japan Business Co-operation Committee and the European Australian Business Council. Mr Pappas also served as part of an Australian Federal Government Digital Taskforce.





# FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



**MR SAM CICCARELLO**

**Director**

Mr Ciccarello was elected to the Football Australia Board in November 2023. Mr Ciccarello has been involved in football for 35 years commencing as a junior coach. Mr Ciccarello's football journey includes roles as Event Director and COO for the Sydney Olympic Games Organising Committee SA's Olympic Football Tournament operations, in the professional club setting as founding GM, then later, CEO of Adelaide United FC, and in grassroots and community football as director (2013-2022), Chair and President (2016-2022) of Member Federation, Football South Australia. Mr Ciccarello was a member of Football Australia's Congress Review Working Group, and of Football Australia's New Leagues Working Group (unbundling of the professional football leagues from FA). Mr Ciccarello has extensive leadership and senior executive and board experience across the corporate and business sectors in banking and finance, media, sports administration and governance, and in major events. Mr Ciccarello was a long term Panel judge with the Telstra National Business Women's Awards and judge on the Telstra National Business Awards; director on the SA Government's Motor Sport Board, Special Olympics SA Board Member, Whitelion Leadership Advisory Group, Chairman of the St. George Historical and Cultural Committee and association with the Arts, as a past Board Director of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Foundation. Mr Ciccarello is committed to putting back into the community in a substantive and diverse way, particularly with an emphasis on giving voluntary service in a strategic and determinative manner.



**MR MARK BRESCIANO**

**Director**

*Resigned: 17 April 2024*

Mr Bresciano was first elected to the Football Australia Board in October 2019. Born in Melbourne, Mr Bresciano played youth football for Bulleen Lions, before moving into the National Soccer League with Carlton. In 1999, he moved to Italian Serie B side Empoli, beginning a 12-year stay in the country. In 2002, he moved to the Serie A with Parma, later playing for Palermo and S.S. Lazio. From 2011, he spent the final four years of his career in the Middle East, first with UAE Pro League side Al-Nasr and then Qatar Stars League club Al-Gharafa. Mr Bresciano made 84 appearances for Australia, scoring 13 goals. He played in three FIFA World Cups™, two AFC Asian Cups and the 2004 OFC Nations Cup winning team. Mr Bresciano was a member of the Football Development Committee.



**MR STUART CORBISHLEY**

**Company Secretary**

Mr Corbishley was appointed as Company Secretary of Football Australia in May 2022. Mr Corbishley was the General Counsel & Secretary for AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015 and for Football Australia's successful bid for 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup™, and has also acted as General Counsel & Secretary for Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games, Invictus Games Sydney 2018 and Wollongong 2022 UCI Road World Championships. He has also advised Cricket Australia on the establishment of the Men's and Women's Big Bash Leagues, Netball Australia on the establishment of the Super Netball League, Hockey Australia on the establishment of Hockey One League, and Athletics Australia on the establishment of Nitro Athletics.

Currently, Mr Corbishley is a Director of AusTriathlon and also acts as the Company Secretary for Invictus Australia and Netball New South Wales.





# EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



**James Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Alex Davani**  
Chief of Staff



**Peter Filopoulos**  
Chief Corporate Affairs,  
Brand and Communications Officer



**Mel Mallam**  
General Counsel



**Ernie Merrick**  
Chief Football Officer



**Gary Moretti**  
Head of National Teams



**Tom Rischbieth**  
Chief Revenue Officer



**Sarah Walsh**  
Head of AFC Women's  
Asian Cup™ 2026 Office



**Caroline Veitch**  
Chief Financial Officer



# FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA WISHES TO THANK THE MEMBER FEDERATIONS, CLUBS & PARTNERS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED OUR GAME OVER THE PAST YEAR

## MEMBER FEDERATIONS



## A-LEAGUE MEN & A-LEAGUE WOMEN CLUBS



## PARTNERS



BEARE PARK



M.J. BALE







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AUSTRALIA**