



**FOOTBALL
AUSTRALIA**

**MONDAY 25 AND
TUESDAY 26 AUGUST
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**



2025 AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

2025 AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

To our valued peer leaders, football family and friends,

We welcome you to the 2025 Australian Football Leadership Summit – now a defining part of how we reflect, align, and lead together.

This gathering honours – and seeks to serve – the shared work and commitment of so many across our football ecosystem. From grassroots clubs, volunteers, and officials, to players, coaches, referees, fans, families, professional clubs, and state and territory member federations – your passion continues to sustain and shape our game.

This year marks more than a milestone. It marks momentum.

Last year, we began something new – not just a conversation, but a coordinated effort to reshape how we lead, how we collaborate, and how we serve the game. Since then, that intent has grown into a shared movement grounded in steady, purposeful investment – the kind that delivers progress, and leaves a legacy.

This Summit is an opportunity to pause with purpose. To shift from short-term fixes to long-term thinking. To challenge assumptions and gain perspective – by learning from the best and grounding those lessons in our own lived experience of the game. It's a chance to see more clearly, so that, together, we make wiser, more confident decisions for football's future – at every level.

We are honoured to again welcome Professor Boris Groysberg of Harvard Business School. His renowned case study method will help sharpen our understanding of leadership in complex environments. His perspective will not only guide us – it will stretch our thinking and help shape the next chapter of Australian football.

We're also joined by esteemed leaders and close friends from FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation, the Oceania Football Confederation, and the ASEAN Football Federation – a powerful reminder that while our mission is rooted in Australia, our responsibility extends beyond it. And in doing so, we ensure that the impact we create is not only felt within Australia, but carried through Australia – in service of the global game. Because we hold to this truth: Leadership is not defined by authority, but by the strength of intent and example. In football, as in life, culture isn't reshaped by mandate – it is strengthened through trust, consistency, and time.

Our journey of reflection and renewal is complex – but we no longer walk it alone. Across Australian football, we are building partnerships, not just structures; pursuing alignment, not just agreement. We have stepped away from outdated models of command and control and are embracing a more courageous path – one grounded in empowerment, mutual accountability, and belief in the strength of diverse perspectives.

This Summit brings together ideas, disciplines, lived experiences, and ambition – united in our commitment to steward the game with wisdom, care, and courage.

Let's make this moment matter. Let's challenge one another, seek clarity over comfort, and turn insight into meaningful action – not with declarations, but with direction.

On behalf of the Board of Football Australia, thank you for your presence. It is both valued and vital. We look forward to what we will discover, shape, and build – together.

**With respect and shared purpose,
Anter Isaac
Chairman**



OVERVIEW

25-26 August | 2025 Australian Football Leadership Summit

The 2025 Australian Football Leadership Summit continues our shared journey – one grounded in humility, learning, and service. What began last year as a bold step toward unifying and uplifting football’s leadership now grows in depth, substance, and momentum.

This year’s Summit invites us not only to pause with purpose, but to build upon the intent we set in motion together – to examine how we lead, how we support others to lead, and how we make decisions that shape the long-term health of our game.

Across two days, we will challenge assumptions, stretch our thinking, and sharpen our leadership judgement through some of the world’s most respected leadership case studies, tailored to the realities of football and the institutions that surround it.

We are again honoured to be guided by Professor Boris Groysberg of the Harvard Business School, whose distinctive method will lead us through immersive cases designed to surface the tension between performance and culture, leadership and followership, short-term pressure and long-term vision.

Day One: Judgement, Longevity, and Motivation

We begin with the story of **Rob Parson at Morgan Stanley** – a high-performing executive whose results shine but whose style strains his organisation’s culture. Through this case, we’ll reflect on what truly defines “success,” how to lead high performers who don’t always fit, and how to conduct the difficult conversations that shape people and institutions alike.

We then turn to **Thomas Müller**, one of the most enduring one-club athletes in modern football. His career offers profound lessons in adaptability, humility, loyalty, and longevity – and provokes reflection on the value of staying the course, even when others move.

The afternoon will deepen our focus on people – and what it really takes to engage, inspire, and retain top performers. Drawing from the **Four-Drives Theory**, this interactive session will explore what motivates people not only to work hard, but to stay, grow, and lead.

At the close of Day One, the **Chairman of Football Australia** will introduce and present **Australian football’s Enduring Principles**, along with Football Australia’s

philosophical vision and values – anchoring our collective work in a long-term commitment to serve, support, and empower the game and its people. This moment will frame how Football Australia intends to lead – not by control, but rather empowerment guided by clarity of purpose, alignment, and shared ambition.

Day Two: Culture, Courage, and High Performance

We open with **Amazon: Cult or Culture?** – a case that provokes debate about how organisations scale values, sustain intensity, and evolve when leadership changes. What keeps a culture strong when the founder steps back – and how do organisations avoid tipping from high-performance to high-pressure?

We then explore football’s own transformation story with **Bayer Leverkusen** – from ‘Neverkusen’ to undefeated champions. This case invites us to unpack how courageous leadership, alignment across departments, and a focus on mindset helped reverse decades of underperformance – and what lessons non-football institutions can draw from that journey.

We close the Summit with a powerful, research-driven lecture on what truly drives high-performing organisations. In **Building a Great Company**, we’ll ask: What matters most – leadership, culture, or strategy? How do we cut through myths and focus on what actually makes companies thrive?

This Summit brings together peer leaders from every corner of our football ecosystem – from global partners including **FIFA**, the **Asian Football Confederation**, the **Oceania Football Confederation**, and the **ASEAN Football Federation**, to the established and emerging leaders of our clubs, federations, congress, and national teams – all gathered for open, thoughtful dialogue and shared learning.

A dinner at the conclusion of Day One will offer a relaxed and collegial setting — a chance to deepen relationships, spark new connections, and reinforce the shared respect and trust that continue to anchor this leadership movement. Because this Summit is not just a conference. It is a convergence – of insight, experience, and ambition – committed to stewarding Australian football with care, clarity, and courage.

We look forward to what we will discover, question, and build – together.

SESSIONS TO BE DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR BORIS GROYSBERG

The cases will be a mix of sports-based cases and cases that cover relevant topics from other industries.

Monday 25 August | 9:45 to 11:15 | Session 1

Rob Parson at Morgan Stanley (A) (Case Study; Product #: 498054)

Rob Parson was a star producer in Morgan Stanley's Capital Markets division. He had been recruited from a competitor the prior year and had generated substantial revenues since joining the firm. Unfortunately, Parson's reviews from the 360-degree performance evaluation process revealed that he was having difficulty adapting to the firm's culture. His manager, Paul Nasr, faces the difficult decision of whether to promote Parson to managing director. Nasr must also complete Parson's performance evaluation summary and conduct Parson's performance review.

Assignment Questions:

1. *What is your assessment of Rob Parson's performance? Should he be promoted?*
2. *Using the data in the case, please complete the Evaluation and Development Summary presented in Exhibit 3 of the Rob Parson case.*
3. *If you were Paul Nasr, how would you plan to conduct the performance appraisal conversation? What would your goals be? What issues would you raise and why, and how would you raise them?*
4. *If you were Rob Parson, how would you conduct yourself in the performance evaluation meeting? What are your goals?*

The Whys and Hows of Feedback (Article; Product #: 416013)

This is an article that accompanies the Rob Parson case. There are no assignment questions.

Case, article and assignment questions will be distributed in advance

Monday 25 August | 11:45 to 13:15 | Session 2

Thomas Müller: Mr. Bayern Munich (Case Study; Product #: 425-031)

In 2024, FC Bayern Munich superstar Thomas Müller announced his retirement from German national football. His contract with Bayern Munich runs through the end of the 2024-25 season. In 2025, Müller reflects on his long career in football, on the skills that have driven his success, and on how he might apply those skills to his next chapter.

Assignment Questions:

1. *Müller was a "one-club man," opting to stay with FC Bayern Munich for 24 seasons despite having offers from other clubs at multiple points in his career. What were the benefits to Müller of staying with Bayern Munich? What were the downsides? Discuss the pros and cons of staying with a single organization throughout one's career.*
2. *Müller is credited with being able to adapt his style of play to the circumstances. How has this skill been important throughout his career?*
3. *Do you believe that Müller was undervalued by fans and/or by Bayern Munich? What makes you think this, or not? If he was undervalued, why do you think this was the case?*
4. *While he had ups and downs, Müller's career was remarkable for its longevity. How did he weather the setbacks? Which personal attributes contributed the most to Müller's career longevity?*
5. *FC Bayern Munich did not renew Müller's contract after the 2024/25 season, and he was rumored to be considering offers from other clubs, including several in the U.S, as well as considering opportunities off the football pitch. How do you think Müller's skills will transfer to a new club or to a new career?*

Case, article and assignment questions will be distributed in advance



SESSIONS TO BE DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR BORIS GROYSBERG (CONT'D)

Monday 25 August | 14:30 to 16:15 | Session 3

Engaging, Inspiring, Motivating & Retaining Employees (Interactive Lecture)

All managers know that it is critical to engage, retain and inspire employees, especially those who are star performers. Yet, many people struggle to understand and execute the best strategies for doing so. In order to engage, retain and inspire your team, including your best and brightest, you must first understand what drives them. This lecture is based on the groundbreaking 4-Drives Theory developed by Harvard Business School faculty and provides insight into the four key drives that motivate people at work. This lecture will also empower managers with actionable insights on leadership effectiveness and allow them to pinpoint specific changes they can make to improve employee motivation and reduce employee turnover.

Tuesday 26 August | 9:15 to 10:45 | Session 4

Amazon: Cult or Culture? (Case Study; Product # 421008)

Amazon was one of the first entrants in e-commerce. Under the leadership of founder Jeff Bezos, Amazon had expanded beyond books to manufacturing and selling a wide range of products and services globally. Bezos had built a customer-centric culture that permeated all aspects of the company. As Amazon continued to grow and expand into new business areas, would it be able to maintain its culture and practices? How much of Amazon's success depended on the cult of Bezos? As the company continued to diversify beyond Bezos's immediate oversight, what could Amazon do to ensure that it stayed relentless?

Assignment Questions:

1. Would you characterize Amazon as "cult-like" or simply as having a strong corporate culture? What makes a culture "cult-like" versus just strong?
2. Jeff Bezos stepped away from his role as CEO and has decreased his involvement. What impact has his departure had on the company? Over the next ten years, will Amazon perform better, worse or no different without him at the helm and why? Be ready to justify your response.
3. Amazon is built on many practices, such as: The Two-Pizza rule; Six-page memo; Empty Chair and WOCAS (What Our Customers Are Saying); "Just do it" and "Door Desk" Awards; "Light Bulb" ideas; "Bar-raisers"/Career Choice/Pay to Quit; Data-driven decision making and Checklists; Forte (peer performance review system); Day 1 and One vs. Two-way doors. Which of these practices have contributed the most to their success and why? If you had to pick three practices that you would like to adopt at your organization, what would they be and how do you think they would be beneficial?
4. Please discuss Jeff Bezos as a leader. What are the characteristics of his leadership style? What does he do to stay relevant? What are the pros and cons?
5. As you may have seen, Amazon announced that it will be implementing a 5-day in office policy in January. Top executives pointed to issues with innovation and culture, particularly in upholding their leadership principle, "disagree and commit". In your opinion, its Leadership principle "Disagree and Commit" harder in person, harder virtually, or no different?
6. What was the most important thing you learned from this case? What question did the case raise about you and your company?

Case and assignment questions will be distributed in advance



SESSIONS TO BE DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR BORIS GROYSBERG (CONT'D)

Tuesday 26 August | 11:15 - 12:45 | Session 5

From Neverkusen to Meisterkusen: * Building a Winning Organization at Bayer Leverkusen

This case follows Bayer Leverkusen football team through 2018-2024, as Fernando Carro takes the helm and makes organizational changes. Led by CEO Fernando Carro, sporting director Simon Rolfes, and head coach Xabi Alonso, the Club becomes league champion for the first time in its 120-year history while becoming the first team in the Bundesliga to complete an undefeated season.

Assignment Questions:

1. *What leadership qualities did Fernando Carro, Simon Rolfes, and Xabi Alonso demonstrate, and how did their leadership styles complement each other in building a high-performing team?*
2. *How did Bayer Leverkusen create a culture of collective responsibility and continuous improvement across both the playing squad and the 'team behind the team'? What were the key decisions and actions taken?*
3. *What role did talent selection and composition (youth vs. experience, playing style fit, mindset) play in designing a winning team? Is the same approach sustainable over time?*
4. *What structures, behaviors, and systems were critical to sustaining alignment and high performance off the field (e.g., communication, coordination, decision-making)?*
5. *How did Bayer Leverkusen instill a "winning mindset" across a historically underperforming team?*
6. *What can non-sports organizations learn from Bayer Leverkusen's team-building approach?*

Case and assignment questions will be distributed in advance

Tuesday 26 August | 14:15 - 15:45 | Session 6

Building a Great Company in 2023 (Interactive Lecture)

What drives organizational performance? Some factors are impactful and others are irrelevant. There are a lot of myths about what drives the performance of companies, and in this session we will separate myth from reality. How much does the company leadership matter? What about the industry and the economy? What about the company itself? Is strategy more important than high performing culture? Do the best companies really need to be great innovators? This session draws on the latest research on the drivers of organizational performance and shows how leaders who take a more strategic approach can create more successful organizations. Participants will leave this session with a deeper understanding of what is required for organizational success, as well as practical, implementable strategies that they can leverage to build a great company.



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ATTENDANCE
43,020

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GIVE A
CHEER
& A HALF
FOR YOUR #1 SUPPORTER



DETAILED AGENDA OF THE TWO-DAY SUMMIT INCLUDING WORKSHOP SCHEDULES

Monday 25 August, 2025 (DAY 1)		Tuesday 26 August, 2025 (DAY 2)	
0845 – 0915	Arrival & Registration	0830 – 0900	Arrival
0930 – 0945	Welcome & Introduction Anter Isaac - Chairman, Football Australia Acknowledgement of Country	0900 – 0915	Welcome & Recap of Day 1
0945 – 1115	Session 1 Rob Parson at Morgan Stanley (A) (Case Study)	0915 – 1045	Session 4 Amazon: Cult or Culture? (Case Study)
1115 – 1145	Coffee Break	1045 – 1115	Coffee Break
1145 – 1315	Session 2 Thomas Müller: Mr. Bayern Munich (Case Study)	1115 – 1245	Session 5 From Neverkusen to Meisterkusen: * Building a Winning Organization at Bayer Leverkusen (Case Study)
1315 – 1430	Lunch	1245 – 1415	Lunch
1430 – 1615	Session 3 Engaging, Inspiring, Motivating & Retaining Employees (Interactive Lecture)	1415 – 1545	Session 6 Building a Great Company (Interactive Lecture)
1615 – 1645	Session 4 Introducing Australian Football's Enduring Principles and Football Australia's Values and Vision	1545 – 1600	Closing Remarks
1645 – 1700	Closing Remarks	1600	Event End
1900	Dinner		



PROFESSOR BORIS GROYSBERG

KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND LECTURER

Boris Groysberg is a professor of business administration in the Organisational Behaviour unit at the Harvard Business School. He teaches talent management and leadership courses in the school's MBA and Executive Education programs.

He has won numerous awards for his research, which focuses on the challenge of managing human capital at small and large organisations worldwide. His work focuses on how firms can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by engaging employees in the implementation of business strategy.

Groysberg is the author of the award-winning book *Chasing Stars: The Myth of Talent and the Portability of Performance* and more recently the *Glass Half Broken- Shattering the Barriers That Still Hold Women Back at Work* (2021).

A frequent contributor to *Harvard Business Review*, he has written many articles and case studies on how firms hire, engage, develop, retain, and communicate with their talented employees. Before joining the Harvard Business School faculty, he worked at IBM.





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