

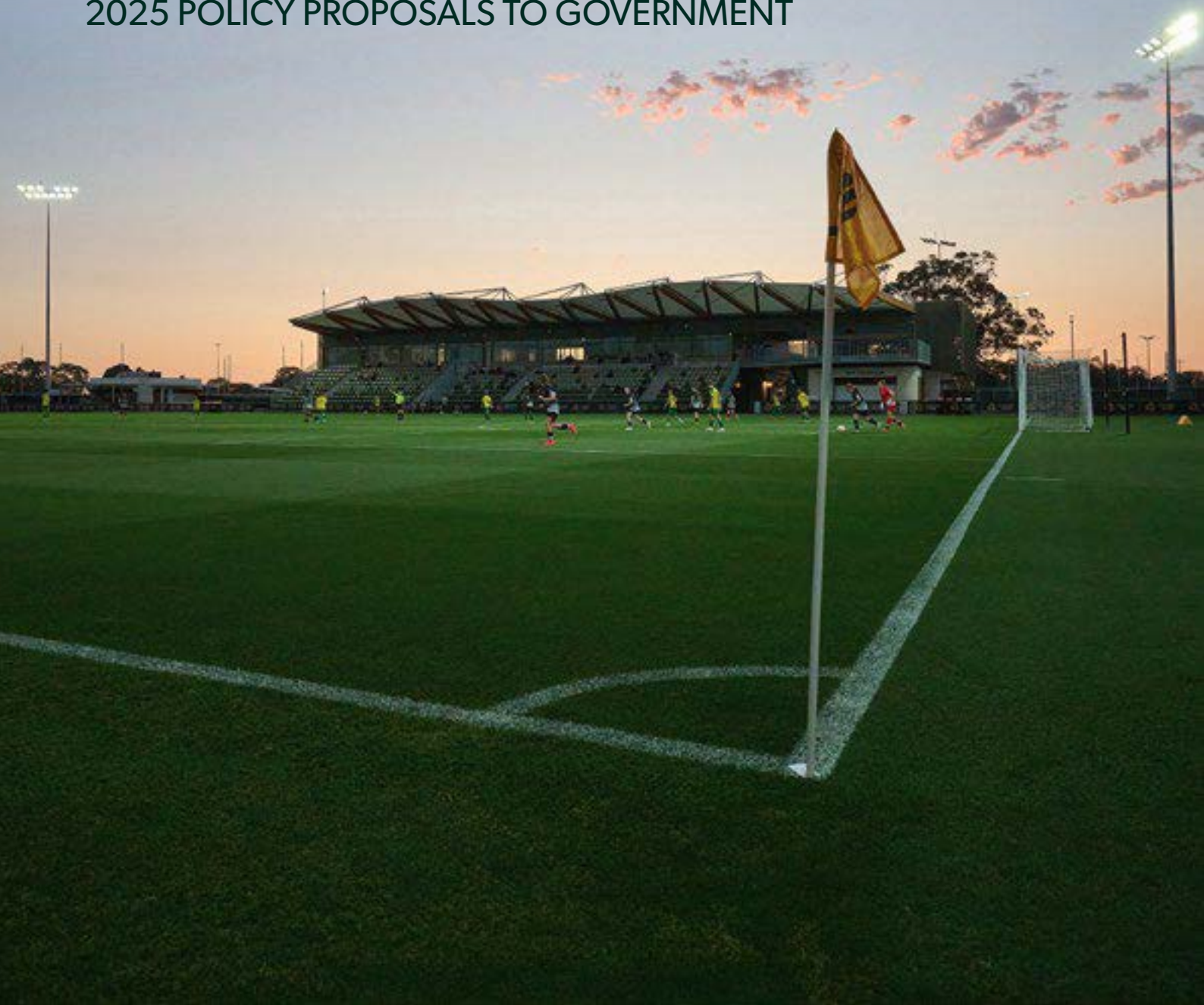
A LEAGUES



**FOOTBALL
AUSTRALIA**

SECURING OUR FOOTBALL FUTURE

2025 POLICY PROPOSALS TO GOVERNMENT





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FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA'S POLICY PROPOSALS TO GOVERNMENT



1. 2024 National Participation Report, Football Australia, 20 February 2025.
2. 'Soccer,' Library of Congress Research Guides.
3. 2024 National Participation Report.
4. 'Football Australia celebrates hosting the most successful FIFA Women's World Cup ever,' Football Australia, 22 August 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Football, as Australia's and the world's biggest game, is unmatched in participation both domestically and globally.

No other sport in Australia is played in every corner of the country and across every continent.

It is Australia's most popular sport and the world's most-watched. No other Australian sport is played professionally in every state and territory, the Olympics, and features a global tournament that is the most-watched sporting event in the world.

In 2024, there were 1.91 million participants involved in football in Australia across 3,302 active clubs - playing, coaching, or refereeing at grassroots, amateur, and professional levels.¹ Globally, football has more than 240 million registered players and over 5 billion fans.²

Football is a thriving sport that continues to exceed all expectations for growth. The latest statistics reveal an increase of 11 per cent in participants over the past 12 months.³ This surge is placing enormous pressure on community facilities to accommodate the growing demand. Current facilities are not being upgraded or maintained adequately, causing a significant gap in grassroots infrastructure. The greatest needs within communities are for more changerooms, improved lighting and better drainage.

The power of football is not only evident in participation but also in viewership, as it remains the most-watched sport in Australia and the world. In 2023, the Matildas set an Australian record for television viewership with 11.15 million viewers tuning in for their 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup Semi-Final.⁴ Worldwide, 5 billion people - more than half the world's population - engaged with the 2022 Men's FIFA World Cup, surpassing even the Olympics in global engagement.

These compelling statistics highlight football's ability to unite local communities and nations, fostering both social and economic bonds. Football Australia's grassroots programs promote social cohesion by bringing together individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds through a shared passion for the game.

While football's popularity has long been recognised in Australia, its broader societal and economic contributions are often overlooked. Australian society and the economy benefit greatly from football's role in the country, including the millions of volunteers who contribute to this thriving sport daily.

Football Australia operates under a federated model, with state and territory Member Federations serving as independent legal entities responsible for governing football within their respective regions. Football Australia collaborates closely with all Member Federations and the Australian Professional Leagues (A-Leagues) to foster an

environment of growth and professional development. Football Australia also takes pride in its gender balance across leadership roles, including its current Board of Directors and Board subcommittee members.

To nurture emerging talent, Football Australia has established comprehensive player development pathways. Initiatives such as the Talent Support Program provide high-quality training environments and expanded competitive opportunities for aspiring athletes.

Looking ahead, Australian football faces a range of challenges and opportunities, including:

- Supporting the Socceroos' FIFA World Cup qualification efforts
- Growing the A-Leagues
- Hosting a successful AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™
- Establishing the Australian Championship—the National Second Tier
- Streamlining player development pathways to navigate Australia's complex football ecosystem
- Addressing the grassroots facilities gap to better serve local community clubs and meet rising demand

This document outlines 23 policy areas that football has identified as requiring support, focus, investment, or resourcing. It is the result of collaboration with all Member Federations, the Australian Professional Leagues, local football clubs, and various stakeholders.

Our recommendations aim to enhance collaboration at all levels of government—Federal, State, and Local—to address the evolving needs of football.

By working with the government, Football Australia is confident that we can enhance the quality and capability of football, ultimately improving the health, well-being, and national pride of all Australians.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin Kugeler".

Mr Martin Kugeler (CEO)



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anter Isaac".

Mr Anter Isaac (Chair)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

FOOTBALL CAN DELIVER
A HEALTHIER AND MORE
UNITED AUSTRALIA WITH
CLOSER CONNECTIONS TO
ASIA AND THE WORLD



Infrastructure Investment

1.

Football Australia welcomes the groundbreaking “Play Our Way” grant program and calls on all levels of government to replicate this approach through a dedicated long-term funding programs to **close the significant grassroots facilities gap** across community football facilities. Specifically, Football Australia calls on:

- a. The next **Federal Government to establish a fully funded, indexed rolling ten-year program for community sport** to meet the **\$1.56 billion** changeroom facilities gap across Australia.
- b. **All State and Territory Governments to establish fully funded, indexed rolling ten-year programs for community sport to meet the \$851 million lighting facilities gap** in their jurisdiction.
- c. Local Governments across Australia to hypothecate **\$391 million**, in combination, over the next five years from their capital works spending to meet the **drainage facilities gap** in their area.

2.

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government to invest **\$50 million for the establishment of a National Football Headquarters** for Football Australia, the Australian Professional Leagues, a National Football Museum, a National High Performance Development Centre and visiting international Member Associations.

3.

Football Australia calls on the next **Federal Government and State Governments to invest in the establishment of National Institutes of Football across Australia**, in coordination with our state Member Federations and State Governments.

4.

Football Australia calls on **State and Local Governments and Federal Members of Parliament to support local infrastructure projects and programs for the A-Leagues Clubs**, specifically a Centre of Excellence for the Macarthur Bulls, Melbourne City’s Women’s Stadium at Casey Fields and Melbourne Victory’s Sporting Campuses.

5.

Football Australia calls on **State and Territory Governments to coordinate with their respective Member Federations to allocate funding to complete priority local football infrastructure projects.**

6.

Football Australia calls on **all levels of Government to fund and support their respective State Homes of Football**. This includes expansion for Valentine Sports Park, Sam Kerr Football Centre, Victoria’s Home of the Matildas, the Queensland State Home of Community Football, as well as the establishment of the Tasmanian Home of Football, Capital Home of Football and the Home of Football Mid North Coast.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Social and development programs

7.

Football Australia welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to Sports Diplomacy. As Australia's only sport played in every corner of the world, Football Australia calls on the next **Federal Government to increase resources and funding for sports diplomacy opportunities** that only football can provide.

8.

Football Australia calls on the Federal, NSW and Victorian Governments to commit to **\$1 million in seed funding for the Australian Championship** (National Second Tier) to establish a viable link between the grassroots and professional levels.



9.

Football Australia calls on the next **Federal Government to support initiatives to increase football development and female participation throughout Asia and the Pacific** by funding development projects between Football Australia and the Asian Football Conference (AFC) and Oceania Football Confederation (OFC).

10.

Football Australia calls on all levels of Government to **collaborate with Football Australia to co-fund and design vital social programs to promote health initiatives, social cohesion, female participation and retention programs, and social justice programs** centred around respect, domestic violence and disabilities.

Regulatory reform

11.

Football Australia calls on all levels of government to **streamline grant funding application processes** to remove barriers for football clubs in CALD and First Nations communities.

12.

Football Australia calls on Federal and State Governments to establish a formal process to **expedite and streamline bidding opportunities for major international football tournaments**.

13.

Football Australia calls on the next **Federal Government to standardise participant reporting** to assess the true size of a sports participation and mitigate incorrect sports reporting.

14.

Football Australia supports the Australian Sports Foundation's campaign to amend the Charities Act 2023 and calls on the next **Federal Government to allow charitable status for community sport**.

15.

Football Australia calls on State and Territory Governments to work with Football Australia to adopt **more flexible venue tenancy agreements** as sport increasingly competes with nonsporting events and concerts.

16.

Football Australia calls on the next **Federal Government to strengthen the role of Sport Integrity Australia to include data and integrity standards** for registrations of participants.

17.

Football Australia calls on the next **Federal Government to amend the criteria for Visa classes to recognise the circumstances of women's football** in the A-Leagues Women competition to allow international players greater flexibility for employment.

18.

Football Australia calls on State and Territory Governments to work with the Australian Professional Leagues to adopt **national standards to prevent the sale of marine flares for inappropriate use**.

19.

Football Australia calls on **State and Territory Governments to review high policing costs for stadium event hire** and work with the APL to **establish guidelines for effectively policing football matches**.

20.

Football Australia calls on **State, Territory and Local Governments to adopt urban and land use planning policies** that ensure sporting fields and community hubs are included in new housing developments and growth centres.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Preparation for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics

21.

Football Australia and Football Queensland call on the **Federal and Queensland Governments to support our joint submission for the redevelopment of Perry Park** into a minimum 17,000 seat tier 2 boutique rectangular stadium as part of the infrastructure priorities for Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

22.

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government to work with Football Australia to resource and develop our **“Golden Matildas and Olyroos” strategy in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.**

23.

Football Australia calls on a **next Federal Government to broaden the formula for High Performance funding associated with the Olympic Games** to recognise the sporting, social and economic impact beyond medal tallies.





STRONG PERFORMANCES
BY THE MATILDAS AND
OLYROOS WOULD UNDERPIN A
SUCCESSFUL BRISBANE GAMES

FOOTBALL AT HOME

MORE AUSTRALIANS ARE
PLAYING FOOTBALL THAN
EVER BEFORE, AND OUR
COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEED
TO MATCH THIS GROWTH





Investing in our grassroots facilities

Grassroots and community sports are the foundation for Australia’s sporting success, a healthy society and social cohesion.

As Australia’s number one participation sport, with over 3,300 active clubs, this is especially true for football. It’s the place where our kids start to fall in love with the world game and is a place where kids and adults can socialise, stay healthy and fit.

Football Australia’s 2024 Participation Report showed total participation increased by 197,052 or 11% from 1,715,441 to 1,912,493.⁵

The growth achieved in 2024 reflect a strong trajectory for Australian Football:

Program	% Change	2024	2023
Outdoor Football	+ 10%	640,234	582,635
Social Football	+ 13%	174,846	154,403
Registered Coaches	+ 19%	68,425	57,488
Registered Referees	+ 10%	13,544	12,276
Volunteers	+ 26%	29,502	23,433
Social Schools Football	+ 13%	571,744	504,424
Community Football Programs	+ 13%	332,202	292,757
Specific Diversity and Inclusion Programs	+ 7%	24,697	23,036
Total Participation 2024	+ 11%	1,912,493	1,715,441

5. [2024 National Participation Report](#).

One of the greatest challenges facing football in Australia is the inadequate state of our community facilities: the **'facilities gap' between the current condition of community infrastructure and the standards required to ensure quality facilities** to accommodate the growing number of participants and ensure access for female footballers.

Community clubs are under enormous pressure to accommodate the significant growth in football participation (particularly among women and girls), because of deteriorating facilities, rapid urban development limiting suitable greenfield spaces, and more extreme weather events.

Addressing this growth in demand for community football means tackling the facilities gap, at all levels of government, by:

- Building more **changerooms**, including multigender changerooms, to accommodate more participants and ensure access for women and girls.
- Expanding **lighting** infrastructure to allow for evening use, increasing scheduling flexibility and available playing hours.
- Investing in improved **drainage** to safeguard field quality against extreme weather conditions.

Football Australia commends and welcomes the "Play Our Way" grant program as a starting point for addressing the facilities gap. Football Australia now calls on a future Federal Government to establish a similar ongoing ten-year, indexed rolling infrastructure fund to meet the ongoing facilities gap.





Football Australia and our Member Federations have mapped the condition of all existing football facilities across Australia, including metropolitan and regional areas. This sophisticated mapping provides an indicative point-in-time assessment of the quality of facilities against a minimum standard for the three categories above: multigender changeroom access, drainage systems, and lighting infrastructure. Football Australia engaged expert planning and infrastructure consultants to cost the investment required to bridge the facilities gap and bring all existing community football sites up to standard for these categories.

As of December 2024, this analysis identified **2,103 venues across Australia requiring investment through 7,848 proposed projects to meet the minimum standard** for these categories. This represents more than 5,100 football pitches used by local communities.

The estimated cost of this investment is **\$2.8 billion over 10 years** to be shared by all levels of government. Importantly, our analysis indicates that approximately **two thirds of these sites are shared with other sports** (including AFL, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Touch Football, Athletics, and Cricket), meaning that the benefits of this investment would extend beyond just football. Gaps in the available data informing this analysis mean that the actual figure of shared facilities is likely to be even greater.

Only through targeted investment on better drainage, more lighting and more changerooms can we solve the facilities gap. Football Australia proposes Local, State and Federal Government work together to fund these three infrastructure priorities as follows”

Level of Government	Facility Gap	Rationale
Federal Government	Changerooms	Encouraging and maintaining women’s participation in football.
State Government	Lighting (to 100 Lux LED)	Increasing field hours of use to meet sport participation demands.
Local Government	Drainage	Fields and ongoing maintenance are a key responsibility of local government, and they are best placed to carry out the works through their ongoing maintenance program.

A breakdown of required investment and projects by state and category is below.

		NSW	VIC	SA	WA	QLD	TAS	ACT	NT	TOTAL
Changerooms	Projects	786	180	132	118	141	58	51	-	1466
	Cost	\$790 m	\$107 m	\$106 m	\$77 m	\$127 m	\$66 m	\$67 m	-	\$1340 m
Lighting	Projects	1685	531	214	318	402	154	165	9	3478
	Cost	\$343 m	\$100 m	\$51 m	\$63 m	\$92 m	\$40 m	\$30 m	\$3 m	\$722 m
Drainage	Projects	1601	425	97	118	429	82	143	9	2904
	Cost	\$185 m	\$47 m	\$11 m	\$14 m	\$54 m	\$10 m	\$14 m	\$1 m	\$336 m
Total	Projects	4072	1136	443	554	972	294	359	18	7848
	Cost	\$1,318 m	\$254 m	\$168 m	\$154 m	\$273 m	\$116 m	\$111 m	\$4 m	\$2,398 m

N.B. The above figures are based on a point-in time analysis conducted for Football Australia by Astrolabe Group, based on data available as of December 2024. These figures do not account for escalated costs over the 10-year period (based on an inflation rate of 3% p.a.). For a 10-year upgrade plan to 2034, the estimated total cost of works across Australia is \$2.8 billion to upgrade 2,103 venues.

RECOMMENDATION

The next Federal Government to establish a fully funded, indexed rolling ten-year program for community sport to meet the **\$1.56 billion changerroom facilities gap** across Australia.

RECOMMENDATION

All State and Territory Governments to establish fully funded, indexed rolling ten-year programs for community sport to meet the **\$851 million lighting facilities gap** in their jurisdiction.

RECOMMENDATION

Local Governments across Australia to hypothecate **\$391 million**, in combination, over the next five years from their capital works spending to meet the **drainage facilities gap** in their area.

Key Member Federation infrastructure projects



In addition to meeting the minimum standards for existing community facilities, local football associations and clubs seek investment in new infrastructure to ensure continued participation in football in their communities.

Football New South Wales

Caddies Creek Sporting Complex Stage 2 – Home of Hills Football

A new project for the Hills Football Association and Hills United to accommodate growing participation in football and urban development in the area.

Rudd Park – Home of Football Canterbury

New headquarters facility for the Football Canterbury District and Belmore Eagles Football Club.

Cromer Park

The building of an amenity building for Manly Warringah Football Association and Manly United's NPL team.

Melita Stadium

Establishing the Home of Football masterplan for Granville Districts Soccer Football Association and Parramatta FC NPL team.



“Football is the most popular sport in New South Wales, with the highest participation rates, yet many facilities are outdated. Investment in modern fields, lighting, and female-friendly amenities is essential to support our growing football community. Government funding will ensure safe, inclusive spaces for all players, driving participation and talent development.”

Football NSW – John Tsatsimas CEO



Key Member Federation infrastructure projects



NORTHERN NSW
FOOTBALL

Northern NSW Football

Football Mid North Coast

New development for Thrumster Sports fields and community facility, including three fields, amenities, and six synthetic small-sided fields to cater for high level football and community clubs.

Hunter Valley Football

The establishment of a facility as a home of football for the Hunter Valley Football Zone. The facility will include playing fields, training base (smaller synthetic fields) and office space for the zone's operations. This will provide accessibility for all boys and girls from the vast Hunter region to access a quality football facility.

Newcastle Football

Building a new facility at Creek Road to include new amenities, four fields, carpark and fencing. Council are supportive of this project, which will help increasing participation in football in a high population growth area.

Football Far North Coast

Upgrading the Bangalow Sports Fields amenities to provide inclusive changerooms for players & match officials.



“Football is Australia’s largest team sport with strong roots in Northern NSW communities. However, inadequate regional facilities hinder participation. Modern infrastructure like quality fields, lighting, and inclusive changerooms is urgently needed. Investing in football facilities supports physical health, social inclusion, and community ties. It’s time to ensure Northern NSW’s football facilities reflect the sport’s importance in building healthier, more connected communities”

Northern NSW Football – Peter Haynes CEO





**FOOTBALL
VICTORIA**

Football Victoria

Geelong

Delivering a 5 pitch major football facility in Geelong to handle unprecedented growth, with concept designs to be completed in 2025. Significant council funding has been allocated over a 4-5 year period, however, further funding is required to meet the current funding shortfall.

Moonee Valley Soccer Hub

Delivering a major football facility for Moonee Valley. A location has been identified, and a masterplan and design process is underway. Federal funding is required to unlock the current funding shortfall.

Beveridge Central Sporting Complex

Delivering a major football facility for Beveridge. A location has been identified, and a masterplan and design process is underway. A partnership with Melbourne Victory FC has been secured for this project (it would serve as their 'Northern Campus') and federal funding is required to unlock the current funding shortfall.

Warrnambool Regional Football Hub (Brierly Reserve)

Delivering a Sports Pavilion & Community Hub Project alongside recently completed pitch and lighting construction. Concept designs for the broader project are complete, with detailed designs still required. Federal funding is required to unlock the current funding shortfall.

Mildura Regional Football Hub (Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex)

Delivering a Sports Pavilion project in the remote Mildura area, with concept designs underway and detailed designs required. A commitment of additional funding is required to ensure progress of this project.



“Football in Victoria is booming, particularly in growth corridors with young families but our local facilities are struggling to keep pace. Children are being turned away due to a lack of suitable playing fields and facilities. Government investment in modern, accessible pitches and club community infrastructure is essential to creating more opportunities for children, fostering community connections and ensuring football remains inclusive and accessible for all.”

Football Victoria – Dan Birrell Acting CEO

Key Member Federation infrastructure projects



FOOTBALL
QUEENSLAND

Football Queensland

State Home of Community Football (Meakin Park)

The State Home of Community Football (SHOCF) will be located in South East Queensland and Logan, enhancing both grassroots participation and elite development through a fit-for-purpose hub facility. By prioritising accessibility and inclusivity, the facility will offer crucial resources for players at all levels, providing a community sports hub as well as high-performance facilities capable of hosting regional, state and international team training camps and matches.

Additionally, the SHOCF will support Football Queensland's FQ Academy and development programs. The facility will feature ten football fields, a specifically designed women's academy, an indoor multi-sports centre, a sports science and sports medicine centre, recovery and educational spaces, and administrative and commercial areas.

The SHOCF will be the state's largest rectangular field training and events venue. It will attract sports tourism and host major multicultural football events, extending its impact beyond sport and supporting health and social cohesion outcomes for the local community. The facility is positioned to play a crucial role in improving the living standards of surrounding communities.



"Queensland's football participation is surging, but inadequate facilities hold us back. Government support is vital to upgrade fields and amenities, ensuring safe, all-weather spaces for our growing community. Investing in grassroots football strengthens health, inclusion, and talent pathways."

Football Queensland – Rob Cavallucci CEO

World Game Community Infrastructure Fund

To address key gaps, FQ seeks government support for a World Game Community Infrastructure Fund, an initiative proposing a targeted co-contribution funding model in partnership with the Queensland State Government. This model would see \$20 million per annum invested over an initial three-year period in capacity and capability improvement projects, such as gender-neutral change facilities, lighting, drainage and irrigation, and new fields.

Tier 2 Rectangular Stadium at Perry Park

The proposed new stadium will be a cornerstone of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games legacy by supporting the professional game in Queensland by providing a fit-for-purpose venue tailored for football and other rectangular sports. It will function as a versatile facility capable of hosting conferences and concerts. With a seating capacity of 16,000 to 20,000, this venue would enhance Brisbane's ability to host national and international events while bolstering the growing female professional sports scene.



**FOOTBALL
WEST**

Football West

Sam Kerr Football Centre

Extending the current Sam Kerr Football Centre to expand the current accommodation for Football West's charitable partner, Football Futures Foundation.

The expansion would include a futsal centre to provide for all-abilities programming as well as traditional futsal. The additional fields will allow for community usage for sport and large community events and festivals. The expansion would also provide for more car parking space.

Gloucester Park (Margaret River)

Upgrading the current pavilion and changing rooms to improve inclusivity and floodlighting for the fields to meet the capacity of Margaret River Soccer Association.

Morgan Park (Armadale)

Development and construction of changerooms at the facility to improve the facilities offered by Armadale Soccer Club for their junior players.

Souness Park (Mt Barker)

Redevelopment of second field to allow for the increased participation numbers of Mt Barker Soccer Club.



“Football West recently conducted a comprehensive, statewide facility audit which highlighted the challenges facing WA clubs and associations. These include a shortage of female-friendly changerooms and a lack of adequate lighting, at a time of record registrations. Government investment is crucial for the continued growth of football in WA and the retention of players, coaches and match officials.”

Football West – Jamie Harnwell CEO

Key Member Federation infrastructure projects



**FOOTBALL
SOUTH
AUSTRALIA**

Football South Australia

Mount Gambier Regional Football Facility

Development of a synthetic pitch with lighting and change facilities, in partnership with Tenison Woods College (Funding Partner). An MOU has been established between Tenison Woods College, Football SA and Blue Lake Soccer Club.

Riverland (Renmark) Regional Football Facility

Development of a synthetic pitch with lighting and clubrooms featuring four change rooms. Engagement has occurred with Renmark Paringa Council and Renmark Olympic SC.

Summit Sport and Recreation Park (Mount Barker)

Stage 2 Development construction of 2 additional synthetic pitches with lighting. Mount Barker Council sees this as a priority project with participation booming.

South Australian State Centre (Home of Football)

Construction of an additional pitch with lighting, with joint funding proposed from Football South Australia and the South Australian Government. Roma Mitchell Secondary College support and joint use.



“Growth in participation is placing a demand on available green space and amenities like never seen before. Football in the state of South Australia has received funding to upgrade club and state-based facilities and this has improved the environment for players and officials, however demand has resulted in an increase in new space being used and this requires an investment to bring these facilities up to a standard.”

Football South Australia – Michael Carter CEO





**FOOTBALL
TASMANIA**

Football Tasmania

Home of Tasmanian Football

To be established in the State's South. The facility would include six full-sized pitches (three synthetic and three turf), plus four five-a-side pitches for all levels of community and elite football, as well as state of the art women's and men's change rooms and training facilities.

The facilities could also be home to future A-League teams.



"Tasmania's rising football participation demands better infrastructure. Many clubs struggle with poor pitches and facilities. Government funding will create modern, inclusive spaces, helping more Tasmanians enjoy the game while promoting healthier, connected communities."

Football Tasmania – Tony Pignata CEO



**CAPITAL
FOOTBALL**



"Football in the ACT is booming, but our facilities are overburdened. Investment in all-weather pitches and inclusive amenities is crucial to meet demand. Government support will ensure every Canberran can access quality football opportunities."

Capital Football (ACT) –
Samantha Farrow CEO

CASE STUDIES: Key Member Federation infrastructure projects



**FOOTBALL
NORTHERN
TERRITORY**

Football Northern Territory

Larrakia Football Park

Infrastructure funding for whole of stadium upgrades to Larrakia Football Park to host National and International football matches with broadcast capability.

Home for Football Northern Territory

Investment for a Home for Football Northern Territory that would accommodate the Australasian Women's International Futsal, Northern Territory Indigenous Women's Academy and High Performance Centre. These upgrades would improve the capability of football in the Northern Territory for Northern Australia and for South East Asia.



"Football is vital in the NT, especially for remote and Indigenous communities. But outdated facilities limit access and development. Government funding for better pitches, lighting, and club amenities will create lasting social and sporting benefits."

Football Northern Territory
Jamie Monteith CEO



RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on State and Territory Governments to coordinate with their respective Member Federations to allocate funding to complete priority local football infrastructure projects.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on **all levels of Government to fund and support their respective State Homes of Football**. This includes expansion for Valentine Sports Park, Sam Kerr Football Centre, Victoria's Home of the Matildas, Queensland's Home of Women's Football and Women's Centre of Excellence at Meakin Park, as well as the establishment of the Tasmanian Home of Football, Capital Home of Football and the Home of Football Mid North Coast.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia and Football Queensland call on the Federal and Queensland Governments to support our joint submission for the redevelopment of Perry Park into a minimum 17,000 seat tier 2 boutique rectangular stadium as part of the infrastructure priorities for Brisbane 2032 Olympics.



A-LEAGUES



“IN THE A-LEAGUES, AUSTRALIANS CAN WATCH OUR HOMEGROWN HEROES COMPETING WITH INTERNATIONAL STARS WEEK IN, WEEK OUT. OUR CONTINUED GROWTH IS THE FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIA’S STATUS AS A GENUINE FOOTBALL NATION.”

Stephen Conroy, Executive Chair,
Australian Professional Leagues



The A-Leagues are foundational for Australian football: they are the place where future Socceroos and Matildas are made, and where Australian kids have the chance to watch their football heroes on a week-to-week basis. While just 20 years old – relatively young compared to other major Australian sports leagues, and most football leagues around the world – the leagues continue to grow and develop.

The A-Leagues separated from FA in 2020 and are now run by the Australian Professional Leagues (APL). The A-Leagues have become highly competitive and feature Australia's stars of the future alongside Socceroos, Matildas and other world-class international players, including World Cup-winner Juan Mata and Brazilian star Douglas Costa. The A-League Men has some of the highest total playing time for under-20s players among comparable leagues, and the league represents a foundational step on the pathway for Australia's best players to play in Europe.

This is demonstrated by the record transfer fees achieved by the A-Leagues last season, as Australia's brightest young talents signed contracts with major overseas clubs – headlined by Adelaide United star Nestory Irankunda's move to German giants Bayern Munich.

Investment in infrastructure and appropriate regulatory adjustments will ensure the A-Leagues can continue to grow and produce future Socceroos and Matildas.



Macarthur Bulls

Macarthur Park Centre of Excellence

Funding is required for the proposed Macarthur Park Centre of Excellence, which will provide an elite high performance sporting facility for Macarthur's men's team and deliver the same opportunity for their future A-League Women's team and academy teams. It will also cater to grassroots football and the broader community, with the facilities to be made available for university and high school students, businesses, clients, grassroots coaches and referees.

The centre will include:

- A multipurpose theatre supporting, health, wellbeing and education services for players and community groups.
- High performance sporting, medical and recovery facilities.
- Meeting rooms to accommodate in person and virtual meetings.
- Three full sized grass playing fields and one synthetic field.

A-LEAGUES



Melbourne City

Women's Stadium

Funding is required for the completion of the Women's Stadium at Casey Fields. The Melbourne City FC Women's team need a permanent venue for competitive matches. Victoria has a distinct lack of appropriate rectangular stadia infrastructure.

Once completed, this venue will be shared for community use, and other sporting teams across other football competitions, clubs, codes and schools. These events will host related community programs that promote gender equality and respect for women including the recent Federal Government funded pilot Man Up Creating Respectful Relationships Program.

Community Programs – City in the Community (CITC)

Funding is required for the expansion of City's renowned Young Leaders Program to continue engaging young people across Melbourne develop inspiring young leaders that make a difference in both the community football world and also the broader community.

Funding is also required for City's Peer Mentoring and Youth Empowerment Program aimed at diverting young people aged 10-17 from criminal, anti-social behaviour promoting social cohesion.



Melbourne Victory

Melbourne Victory plan to invest in infrastructure across the state through a 'campus-based' model featuring facilities for use in a range of communities, which will ensure:

- Consolidation of talent within their catchment.
- Provision of more training and playing facilities to ease the burden on parents of young people playing football.
- Growth of the Melbourne Victory supporter base across Victoria, with flow on effects for participation and membership.

Complementing an existing state government grant, further investment to support additional infrastructure will expand the reach of this proposal. As these facilities will be available for community use, there will be a significant positive impact in terms of health and social cohesion.





Western Sydney Wanderers



In conjunction with Western Sydney University, redevelopment of the Western Sydney Parklands on Quakers Hill Parkway to facilitate Stage 1 of a new facility for future growth, including a Centre of Excellence for women's football. This would be in consultation with Blacktown Football Association.

A Stage 2 of this facility would include repurposing the existing facility as a Women's Football Centre of Excellence.

This project has in-principle support from local government representative at all levels. Western Sydney Wanderers calls on all parties to work together and finalise a business case and funding model.



Perth Glory

Support is required from all levels of government to develop a state-of-the-art training & administration facility for Perth Glory.

Due to Perth Glory's unique geographical location, there are significant opportunities for football exchange tours into Southeast Asia. These opportunities are best done in partnership with government and Perth Glory invites the Federal and State government to explore meaningful sporting outcomes which align with trade and diplomatic opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on State and Local Governments and Federal Members of Parliament to support local infrastructure projects and programs for the A-Leagues Clubs, specifically a Centre of Excellence for the Macarthur Bulls, Melbourne City's Women's Stadium at Casey Fields and Melbourne Victory's Sporting Campuses.

REGULATORY CHANGES



Flares at football matches

The improper use of marine flares outside of stadiums remains an issue among a very small minority of people. Football Australia and the A-Leagues have a no-tolerance policy for use of flares at football matches, and participants in breach of this policy are punished accordingly.

More stringent regulation around the purchase of flares – ensuring they are only purchased by those intending to use them appropriately – would help address this challenge.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on State and Territory Governments to work with the Australian Professional Leagues to adopt national standards to prevent the sale of marine flares for inappropriate use.

Supporting the A-Leagues fan experience

Football Australia calls on State and Territory Governments to review high policing costs for stadium event hire and work with the APL to establish guidelines for effectively policing football matches.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on State and Territory Governments to review high policing costs for stadium event hire and work with the APL to establish guidelines for effectively policing football matches.

Visa processing for foreign footballers

Approval of visas for foreign footballers playing in Australia remains an issue for the A-Leagues Women. The current A-League Women calendar means foreign players are on contract for less than a year, placing restrictions on which visas are available to them, while also limiting their ability to supplement their income via secondary employment.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government to amend the criteria for visa classes to recognise the circumstances of women's football in the A-Leagues Women competition to allow international players greater flexibility for employment.

AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP - NATIONAL SECOND TIER

Football Australia has established the much-anticipated National Second Tier competition called the Australian Championship. This competition is a significant step to elevating Australia's historic football clubs.

As a second-tier competition complementing the A-League Men, the Championship will improve and expand player development pathways and link grassroots football with the highest level of the sport, creating positive community impacts.

In establishing the Australian Championship, Football Australia undertook two comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP) processes to select NST clubs. The Australian Championship consists of eight foundation clubs— APIA Leichhardt FC, Avondale FC, Marconi Stallions FC, Preston Lions FC, South Melbourne FC, Sydney Olympic FC, Sydney United 58 FC, and Wollongong Wolves FC.

The eight Australian Championship Foundation Clubs will be granted automatic access and will be joined by eight invitational clubs comprised of the Member Federation NPL State Premiers from the respective domestic season - delivering a national competition.

Commencing in October 2025, the Australian Championship will feature a 16-team format, consisting of group stage matches and culminating in an elimination Finals Series.



RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on the Federal, New South Wales and Victorian Governments to commit to \$1 million in seed funding for the Australian Championship (National Second Tier) to establish a viable link between the grassroots and professional levels.

TRANSFER SYSTEM REFORMS

Football Australia, Australian Professional Leagues (APL), and Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) have jointly committed to reforms ahead of the 2025/26 A-Leagues Season. This decision is part of a broader initiative to review and enhance the economic model of our professional game.

The phase-out will be implemented in two stages, starting with amendments to allow certain transfers between clubs with common ownership while maintaining specific limits. The second stage will involve a comprehensive analysis of the A-Leagues' economic framework, including assessing the salary cap's effectiveness and exploring the potential for transfer fee payments between A-League Clubs. Our goal is to create a more sustainable and competitive environment for our clubs and players, reflecting the evolving landscape of Australian football.



WOMEN IN FOOTBALL - INSPIRING RECORD GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION



Women's football is the leading contributor to the growth of sport in Australia. The inspiring impact of the Matildas is delivering increases across women's, men's, girls' and boys' participation.

The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™ was a historic milestone in Australia's sporting journey, showcasing the transformative power of women's football.

Our Legacy '23 strategy is Football Australia's blueprint for driving significant and transformative changes within football.

This includes maximising the opportunities of hosting the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™, while also setting our sights on the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil and the 2028 LA Olympics & Paralympics.

Women's football is not only a sport but a movement.

Football is the only team sport in Australia which offers women the opportunity to establish professional sporting careers globally. We are committed to making women's football enduring by making sure it remains visible, accessible, and supported, both nationally and globally.

At a community level, Football Australia is working with our Member Federations to implement community programs to increase participation among women and girls by cultivating inclusive pathways for involvement.

PILOT OF FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA ACADEMIES

Technical development shapes the future of football in our country.

Football Australia is piloting Football Australia Academies to enable more players and coaches grow and develop, regardless of their economic, geographic or social circumstances. Our aim is to create a football environment which identifies and develops world class players, coaches and teams that enhance the technical skills, tactical understanding, and high-performance behaviours.

The Football Australia Academies will be tailored to accommodate the unique characteristics of our Member Federations to form programs that includes the FIFA Talent Development Scheme (TDS), National Youth Championships (NYC) and U17 boys and girls National Teams.



A NEW NATIONAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM – PLAYFOOTBALL 2.0

As Australia’s largest participation sport, our registration system must meet obligations as football’s National Sporting Organisation (NSO) to ensure integrity, security and governance standards.

Historically, football registration has been a mix of platforms, creating an inconsistent customer experience and a disconnected database raising privacy and integrity issues.

Football Australia has listened to its participants and stakeholders and developed a single registration platform to improve governance. Launched in December 2024, Football Australia will continue to invest in this platform to evolve it into a state of the art platform that meets participants needs.



FOOTBALL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Football Australia is the accredited Sporting Schools provider for football in Australia.

Our programs are designed by our technical and youth development teams involving fun, engagement and physical activity with learning and educational principles.

Football Australia's tailored school sports programs are designed by our youth development teams to use football as a vehicle for fun physical activity with learning principles that can be applied to a classroom environment. Our MiniRoos program features Matildas, Socceroos and A-Leagues players to encourage school students to participate and engage them in football pathways.

Our programs are tailored to the needs of each school, ranging in duration and are inclusive and available to students of all abilities.



FIRST NATIONS PROGRAMS

Our First Nations programs are focused on bringing football to community, getting more First Nations people involved in football, and leveraging football to drive First Nations empowerment.

These programs are overseen by a dedicated National Indigenous Advisory Group including former First Nations national team players. We are delivering community-focused programs to drive football participation for First Nations people across New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory, including in partnership with FIFA through their Football for Schools program. We also facilitate alternative talent development and performance pathways to provide opportunities for talented First Nations footballers, including through events like the National Indigenous Football Talent Showcase, the NAIDOC Cup, and First Nations Invitational XI participation in national youth competitions.



BUILDING SUCCESS ON THE WORLD STAGE

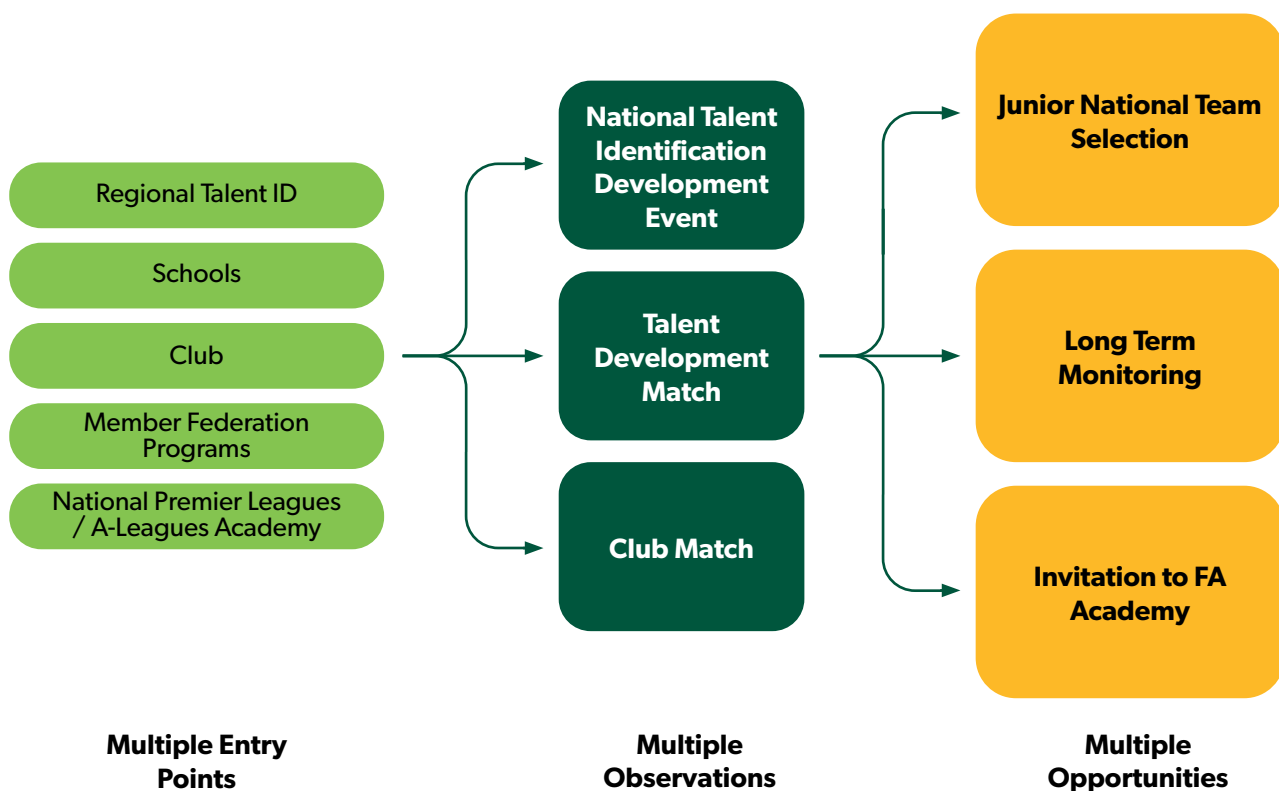


Football Australia’s Technical Strategy is developing targets and initiatives designed to cultivate elite player pathways to create generations of highly accomplished Australian players and successful national teams.

Our aim is to establish a distinctly Australian brand of football – a style of play that represents our attitude, and one that reflects the evolution of the world game.

The Technical Strategy will align with our National Teams and utilise our strong affiliations with FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), as well as Federal and State Government programs.

A core tenet of Football Australia’s Technical Strategy is to ensure there are multiple capture points in different settings, times and over a long-term period to monitor players growth and maturity. Football Australia will ensure that talented players from regional and remote areas, schools, clubs, elite programs, and academies are invited and observed in different events, with each recorded and monitored over time.



NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF FOOTBALL



As Australia’s only truly national and global team sport, Football Australia proposes to establish a network of National Institutes of Football to maintain the growing demands of our National Teams, international tournaments, matches, our administrative functions and pathways programs.

Football Australia administers 11 national teams:

- Socceroos – Senior Men
- Olyroos – U23 Men
- Young Socceroos – U20 Men
- Joeys – U17 Men
- Futsalroos – Futsal Men
- Pararoos – Para Men’s
- Matildas – Senior Women’s
- Rising Matildas – U23 Women’s
- Young Matildas – U20 Women’s
- Junior Matildas – U17 Women’s
- ParaMatildas – Para Women



Today, National Team players are based all around the world and across the vast geography of Australia, regularly play home matches in different Australian cities. This necessitates the need to create a national network of National Institutes of Football that complements our domestic playing schedules, international windows, our Member Federations, and our talent pathway development at all levels of the game - connecting grassroots and semi-elite football with the professional game.

The extensive scale and scope of Australia’s football requires a corresponding extensive network of National Institutes of Football. Football Australia seeks to establish four to five facilities across Australia over the short, medium and long-term, with each facility varying in scope and size to meet the specific needs of its location.

Our National Institutes of Football would also host major competition and gala days, football and multicultural festivals, and host local, regional and national football tournaments across all age groups and abilities.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government and State Governments to invest in the establishment of National Institutes of Football across Australia, in coordination with our state Member Federations and State Governments.

COMMBANK MATILDAS

The Commbank Matildas are more than just a sporting team, they are revered as Australia's most beloved National Team and have achieved more than just 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. The CommBank Matildas have also shifted attitudes and behaviours in Australia as boys, fathers, uncles and grandfathers across the nation have been inspired by female athletes like never before.



6. Legacy '23 Post-Tournament Report, Football Australia, February 2024.

The impact of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™

The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ set a new standard, surpassing all previous benchmarks, and establishing itself as the most significant and successful edition of the tournament. FIFA and the Australian Government's investment into this tournament had extraordinary economic and social impacts on Australian society.

The impact of the Commbank Matildas and the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™ extends beyond football:⁶

The tournament provided **\$1.32 billion in economic impact**, and a **\$324 million reduction in healthcare costs** due to increased physical activity levels.

The Matildas' semifinal against England attracted the largest television audience in Australian history, reaching more than **11 million viewers**.

More than **1 in 3 male football fans agree** that the Commbank Matildas' success has led them to **reconsider their attitudes** to women's roles in society.

94% of teachers and educators regard the Commbank Matildas as **positive role models** at school.

1,288,175 total tickets sold for matches hosted in Australia.

403,136 in attendance across all seven sold out Commbank Matildas matches.

86,654 international visitors with 96% of overseas visitors indicating they would recommend visiting the host city to friends & family.

79% of CALD community respondents agree that the Commbank Matildas and the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™ emphasised the importance of diversity and inclusion.

SUBWAY SOCCEROOS

The Subway Socceroos represent Australia on world sport's biggest stages – from the FIFA World Cup, with larger audiences than the Summer Olympic games, to the AFC Asian Cup, featuring the best teams from the world's most populous continent.

In doing so, the team has a unique capacity to unite Australians at home, as was evident throughout the team's history-making run to the 2022 FIFA World Cup knockout stage. Australians woke up at all hours to support their national team, including tens of thousands who flocked to live sites across the country. The Socceroos' historic AFC Asian Cup victory on home soil in 2015 – defeating South Korea in the final at Stadium Australia – was a similarly unifying moment for the nation.

The cumulative TV audience for Socceroos matches during the 2022 FIFA World Cup exceeded 5 million Australians.⁷

The next FIFA World Cup will be hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada in June and July 2026, with the Subway Socceroos currently midway through their qualification campaign for this tournament. An overview of the Socceroos' qualification path is provided on page 45.

In December 2022, of Australians who reported feeling 'more proud' of Australian sport, 55% identified the Socceroos and/or the 2022 FIFA World Cup as the driver of this shift.⁸



RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government to invest **\$50 million for the establishment of a National Football Headquarters** for Football Australia, the Australian Professional Leagues, a National Football Museum, a National High Performance Development Centre and visiting international Member Associations.

7. 'SBS's best Total TV performers in 2022-23,' Transparency Portal, Australian Government, July 2023.

8. 'Community Perceptions Monitor Update,' Australian Sports Commission, December 2022.

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL AROUND THE WORLD

NO OTHER SPORT CONNECTS
AUSTRALIA WITH THE WORLD
LIKE FOOTBALL DOES



Football is our bridge to the world



As the world’s most popular sport, football represents a critical point of connection for Australia. Football’s global governing body FIFA is composed of 211 national associations (representing more countries than the United Nations) and has established offices on every inhabited continent.⁹

The FIFA World Cup – which the Subway Socceroos are now regular participants in, having qualified for each of the last five tournaments – is the world’s biggest sporting event and represents an unparalleled opportunity to broadcast the Australian brand and enhance our global linkages. Australian football also has a global reach through our playing diaspora and our participation in other FIFA tournaments across senior and youth levels, in both the men’s and women’s games.

5 billion people engaged with the 2022 FIFA World Cup, surpassing even the Summer Olympics.

Furthermore, football is Asia’s most popular sport and Football Australia’s membership of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) ensures that Australian football has deep and regular engagement with our Asian counterparts, particularly in East Asia.

The Subway Socceroos’ narrow defeat against eventual champions Argentina was watched by more than 200 million people worldwide.¹⁰

Australia’s national teams – from the Socceroos and Matildas down to our youth teams – regularly participate in Asian competitions, including FIFA World Cup qualifying, Asian Cups, and youth and development tournaments. Our top A-League clubs participate annually in the AFC Champions Leagues against the best clubs from across the continent, including the newly formed AFC Women’s Champions League in 2024-25.

215+ Australians currently play professional football overseas, spanning more than 45 countries.¹¹

The international reach of Australian football provides an enormous opportunity for Australian Governments. In particular, the Western Australian and Queensland Governments are key partners for engaging with Asian football, given their geographic proximity to our Asian neighbours and (in the case of the former) the opportunities presented by a more aligned time zone.

Our national teams regularly play against many of Australia’s major trading partners through AFC competitions and FIFA qualifying tournaments:

Since 2022, the Socceroos and Matildas have played against 13 of our 15 largest trading partners, for a total of 29 matches.¹²

9. Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

10. ‘FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022: Global Engagement & Audience Detailed Report,’ FIFA.

11. ‘Players Abroad: Australia,’ Soccerway, March 2025.

12. ‘Australia’s Trade in Goods and Services by Top 15 Partners,’ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023.

SPORTS DIPLOMACY IN ASIA



The Australian Government's sports diplomacy strategy in the Pacific represents a model for engaging with some of our nearest neighbours and largest trading partners, such as the ASEAN nations and China.

Football's popularity across the continent – and especially in Southeast Asia – presents a unique opportunity to engage with these countries and advance Australia's national interests through football.

Many football administrators across the AFC are also senior figures in their national governments, highlighting how football is uniquely placed to support and grow the Australian Government's relationships in Asia.

Over the past two years, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has supported activities including a Young Matildas tour in China, international

matches for other national teams, and smaller projects in six AFC nations and Morocco. Scaling up this work in line with the updated Sports Diplomacy Strategy currently being developed by DFAT will ensure that Australia takes advantage of the possibilities offered by our place in Asian football.

Australian Governments can support expanded sports diplomacy through Asian football by:

- Funding further participation by Australian national teams and clubs in competitions and tours in Asia, including at a youth level.
- Facilitating development pathways for athletes, coaches and administrators through formal partnerships with other AFC member associations – especially in women's football, where FA is regarded as a leader by Asian nations.
- Providing logistical and other support for organising diplomatic and trade events tied to major football matches and competitions.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government to increase resources and funding for sports diplomacy opportunities for football programs internationally.

RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on the next Federal Government to support initiatives to increase football development and female participation throughout Asia and the Pacific by funding development projects between Football Australia and the Asian Football Conference (AFC) and Oceania Football Confederation (OFC).

AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AUSTRALIA 2026™

In 2026, Australia will host the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ in Sydney, Perth and the Gold Coast. Pitting the Commbank Matildas against Asia's best, the tournament presents an opportunity to capture the same spirit and interest in women's football as Australia's successful co-hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™.

Hosting the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ is an opportunity to expand on the impressive success delivered by the Women's World Cup. It will further enhance Australia's domestic and international standing by delivering significantly social, economic and cultural uplift. It will be another significant milestone for gender equality in sport and cement football as a professional career path for Australian women. The AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ will also provide substantial diplomatic status to our region over the next two years.

Support from the Federal and New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland Governments has been integral in winning hosting rights and preparing for the tournament.

Government can ensure Australia capitalises on hosting this event by:

- Facilitating opportunities to link the event with Asian sports diplomacy initiatives, including building formal football partnerships with participating nations and connecting with diaspora communities in Australia.
- Committing to investment in women's football participation and facilities in the aftermath of the tournament, to take advantage of the anticipated surge in interest and ensure more women and girls can play football.



Projected impact of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™¹³

Over **half a million** fans attending matches.

\$115 - \$140 million direct visitor and organisational expenditure.

43,000 – 55,000 expected interstate and international visitors, for **285,000 – 360,000** interstate and international bed nights.

900-1,100 FTE-equivalent jobs created.

\$129 million social and health benefits.

\$215 - \$260 million total economic output.

40,000 new football participants at a grassroots level.

13. 'Football Australia celebrates hosting rights for AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026', Football Australia, 15 May 2024.

HOSTING FUTURE TOURNAMENTS

Football Australia is continuously exploring opportunities to host major international football events in the coming decade. As co-hosted tournaments become increasingly commonplace in global football, such an opportunity may include sharing hosting responsibilities with a neighbouring country – presenting an excellent basis for building sporting, cultural, economic and diplomatic ties on an unprecedented scale.

For Football Australia to host additional major tournaments, continued close collaboration and support is required from the Federal Government. This includes:

- Financial and operational backing to assist in the formal bidding process.
- Committing support in a manner that will allow Football Australia to meet bidding deadlines imposed by the relevant competition regulator.
- Facilitating engagement with foreign governments of potential co-host nations.



RECOMMENDATION

Football Australia calls on Federal and State Governments to establish a formal process to expedite and streamline bidding opportunities for major international football tournaments.

THE SUBWAY SOCCEROOS' PATH TO THE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

The Subway Socceroos have qualified for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, to be hosted by the USA, Mexico and Canada.

This is the sixth time in a row that Australia has qualified for the FIFA World Cup, marking a monumental achievement that places us in elite company: only ten other nations have qualified for 6 or more consecutive World Cups, including Brazil, Germany, Argentina, England, France and Spain..

The journey to qualification

As members of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), the Subway Socceroos competed against 45 other nations for 8 direct qualification slots allocated to the AFC. Australia entered the qualification competition at the second round, progressing with six wins from six at the top of our group featuring Palestine, Lebanon and Bangladesh.

The Subway Socceroos' third round group was a challenging one, featuring heavyweights Japan and Saudi Arabia and rising football powers China, Indonesia and Bahrain. Australia confirmed our place in the group's top two – granting us direct qualification for the World Cup Finals – with wins against Japan and Saudi Arabia in June.

Preparations for 2026

This is the first time since 2014 that the Subway Socceroos have qualified for the World Cup Finals directly, without needing to progress through intercontinental playoff matches to secure their place. This gives the team and coaching staff a full year to plan and prepare for the tournament, which will be crucial in delivering the best performance possible. This 12-month lead time also provides Australian Governments the chance to work with Football Australia to maximise opportunities associated with the World Cup Finals as 48 countries meet at the world's biggest sporting event.

GROUP A

Team	Points
Iran	23
Uzbekistan	21
UAE	15
Qatar	13
Kyrgyzstan	8
N. Korea	3

GROUP B

Team	Points
S. Korea	22
Jordan	16
Iraq	15
Oman	11
Palestine	10
Kuwait	5

GROUP C

Team	Points
Japan	23
Australia	19
Saudi Arabia	13
Indonesia	12
China	9
Bahrain	6

The top two teams in each group qualify directly for the World Cup, with the third and fourth-placed teams progressing to a Fourth Round to compete for the remaining 2 direct AFC qualification slots.

FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



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(Chair)



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8

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4



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