

National Premier Leagues

Strategy Development

Project Terms of Reference – March 2017

1. Purpose

The National Premier Leagues Strategy Development Project (NPL Strategy) is designed to establish the framework for the National Premier Leagues WA for the next 5 years.

2. Background

The National Premier Leagues (NPL) is the national second tier competition in Australia that underpins the Hyundai A-League. Every member federation with the exception of Football Northern Territory has introduced an NPL competition. The NPL in Western Australia commenced in 2014 and is managed by Football West.

The NPL is a direct outcome of the National Competition Review (NCR) announced by Football Federation Australia (FFA) in May 2012 which aimed to:

- Address key gaps in the elite player pathway;
- Ensure the sustainability of league competitions nationally; and
- Improve the quality of youth development by clubs of all levels.

A player points system operates in first team squads to provide incentive to clubs to develop players through their youth team structure as well as produce talent that progresses to national pathway programmes (including Skilleroos, NTC and FFA Centre of Excellence) and the Foxtel National Youth League, Hyundai A-League and FFA National Teams.

The NPL represents an important step in the realisation of FFA's strategic vision to make Australia a world class football nation and to better connect elite player development and the wider football community.

3. Deliverable

The project will deliver an NPL strategy that establishes the framework for the NPL competitions (both short and long term). It is anticipated that the project will be completed by mid-2017 and that the outcomes, where applicable and feasible, will be implemented in 2018.

4. Project Management Structure

The management of the project will be two-tiered and consist of a Board appointed Sub-Committee and a Project Reference Group. These 2 working groups will comprise:

4.1 Board Appointed Sub-Committee

- Henry Atturo, Deputy Chairman Football West (Chair of the Sub-Committee)
- Jason Petkovic, Director
- James Curtis, CEO
- Jonathan Cook, General Manager Strategy & Partnerships
- Jamie Harnwell, Head of Development
- Alex Novatsis, Head of Member Services
- Cris Ola, Technical Manager
- Mal Impiombato, FFA General Manager Operations - Competitions
- Chair of the Project Reference Group

4.2 Project Reference Group

Standing Committee Representatives

- NPL Standing Committee – Gabby Valentini, Gary Marocchi, Mark Cheveralls
- State League Standing Committee – Campbell Ballantyne, Phil Kelly, Dave Kindness
- Amateur Standing Committee – Caesar Aquino
- Women’s Standing Committee – Conrad McKelvie
- Junior Standing Committee – Dennis Connors
- Netball WA Representative: Heath Bailey

Football West Staff Representatives

- Jonathan Cook, General Manager Strategy & Partnerships
- Henry Fagan, Strategy and Research Officer
- Jamie Harnwell, Head of Development
- Alex Novatsis, Head of Member Services
- Cris Ola, Technical Manager

External Representatives

- Heath Bailey – Netball WA
- Phil Gregson – Department of Sport and Recreation

Independent consultants will facilitate meetings of the Project Reference Group.

5. Process

The Project Reference Group will utilise several key processes for the development of the NPL Strategy. These will include:

- Desktop review of existing quantitative data;
- Development and delivery of a survey to Football West members and the broader community;
- Facilitation of consultation workshops.

5.1 Stakeholder groups to be consulted during this process include, but are not limited to:

- NPL Standing Committee
- State League Standing Committee
- Amateur Standing Committee
- Zone Representatives
- NPL Senior Clubs
- NPL Junior Clubs
- Community Junior Clubs
- Parents of Junior Players
- State League Clubs
- Women’s Standing Committee
- Amateur League Clubs
- Women’s Clubs
- Broader Football Community
- Local Government Authorities

- WA Local Government Association
- Department of Sport & Recreation
- Football Federation Australia

6. Project administration, monitoring and reporting

6.1 Board Appointed Sub-Committee

The Board appointed sub-committee will meet monthly (or such other period as they determine) and report to the board through the submission of a written report.

6.2 The Project Reference Group

The Project Reference Group will meet fortnightly (or such other period as they determine) and report to the Board Appointed Sub-Committee through the submission of a written report prepared by the project manager.

Draft terms of reference for the Board Appointed Sub-Committee and the Project Reference Group will be developed.

7. In scope

The project will consider all aspects of the National Premier Leagues including matters that affect, but are not unique to the NPL. Some of the key considerations to be considered as part of the Strategy include, but are not limited to:

7.1 Design

- (a) Number of NPL clubs
- (b) Licensing and Eligibility Criteria
- (c) Promotion and relegation
- (d) Women's NPL (implementation, age groups)
- (e) Junior NPL (tiering, pathways)

7.2 Game day experience

- (a) Number of spectators at NPL matches
- (b) Marketing and communications
- (c) Product quality
- (d) Facility standards (seating, AV, hospitality etc.)

7.3 Administrative demands (Football West and FFA)

- (a) Technology and systems
- (b) Reducing volunteer burden
- (c) Compliance

7.4 Sustainability

- (a) Player payment model and salary cap
- (b) Professionals vs amateurs

7.5 Player mobility

- (a) Number of roster windows
- (b) Transfer deadline

7.6 Coaching qualifications

- (a) Accreditation levels
- (b) Course design and delivery
- (c) Cost and availability

7.7 Governance requirements

- (a) NPL Academy Tiers
- (b) Constitutions
- (c) NPL Compliance By-Law

8. Out of scope

Aspects of the NPL competition that are controlled by FFA are specifically excluded from the project. These include, but are not limited to the Player Points System, the rules for visa players and the structure of the national finals series. However, feedback on these issues will be provided to FFA for consideration at the national level.