



**FOOTBALL
AUSTRALIA**

Football Australia Circular

Circular No.21-04

30 July 2021

TO THE MEMBERS OF FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN DOMESTIC MATCH CALENDAR 2021-22

The purpose of this circular is to notify Members of the Australian football Domestic Match Calendar (**DMC**) for the period 2021-22 (**DMC 2021-22**). A copy of the DMC 2021-2022 is available on Football Australia's website.

As noted in [Football Australia Circular No 21-01 – Australian Domestic Match Calendar](#), the [XI Principles for the Future of Australian Football \(XI Principles\)](#), in particular Principle IV, emphasises the importance of a national football calendar to facilitate the realignment of the Australian competitions and to assist in the reconnection of the Australian football pyramid.

The [DMC 2021](#), which was released in February 2021, was an initial interim step towards a more harmonised calendar and consequently, enhanced alignment of competitions. The release of the DMC 2021-22 is the next phase in reconnecting the pyramid.

Developing the DMC 2021-22 in a COVID environment has been challenging, but the release marks the culmination of an extensive stakeholder consultation process. The consultation process has reaffirmed the key objectives and principles of the DMC, being:

- (a) uniting football via enhanced alignment of domestic football opportunities which consequently positively affect participation and engagement;
- (b) further integration of the DMC with FIFA's International Match Calendar (**IMC**) and AFC's calendar; and
- (c) transparent communication of club football and national team activities, which enables enhanced planning and scheduling.

The stakeholder consultation process has also resulted in key milestones for the DMC, which include:

- (a) An organised Australian Football Season between 29 October 2021 and 28 October 2022;
- (b) For Men's football, the Australian Football Season will commence with the A-League from 30 October 2021 and will finish with the FFA Cup Final on 15 October 2022;
- (c) For Women's football, the Football Australia Season will commence with the W-League from 13 November 2021 and finish with the NPL Women's Finals Day on 25 September 2022;
- (d) Specified season windows for the A-League and W-League following the completion of the unbundling from Football Australia and the licensing of the administration and management of these competitions to the Australian Professional Leagues (**APL**). The season window for the A-League will be between 30 October 2021 and 29 May 2022, with the W-League season window will commence from 13 November 2021 and conclude 3 April 2022;
- (e) agreement with APL that the A-League and W-League will respect the applicable FIFA International Windows, as specified in the IMC. This means that the A-League will break for the men's FIFA international windows and the W-League will break for women's FIFA international windows. Due to the ongoing effects of COVID, there will be exceptions to this

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principle applied. For this coming season, the exception will be applied in January 2022 when a men's FIFA international window is scheduled, as there is ordinarily not a window scheduled at this time but for the ongoing effects of COVID-19. During this international window, given the impacts of COVID-19, A-League Clubs will still be required to release players in accordance with the FIFA and Football Australia regulatory frameworks, but A-League matches will be permitted to be scheduled on the weekend of 29 and 30 January 2022, which occurs during the men's FIFA international window currently scheduled for 24 January 2022 – 1 February 2022. To be clear, this doesn't preclude W-League matches being scheduled during men's FIFA international windows, nor does it preclude A-League matches being played in women's FIFA international windows;

- (f) a defined season window for the National Premier Leagues (**NPL**) for both the NPLM and NPLW, and a national NPL Finals weekend for the NPLM and NPLW respectively;
- (g) setting of Transfer Windows that enable the registration of players for all applicable competitions; and
- (h) a mandatory rest period for Professional Leagues players, which would be a cumulative five weeks, the details of which are negotiated between APL and Professional Footballers Australia.

The DMC 2021/22 incorporates a placeholder for a National Second Tier competition, noting that the format of this competition has not yet been finalised. The placeholder is an important first step towards the creation of this competition, allowing for its ongoing development and subject to finalisation of the model, can be adjusted within the DMC framework.

The DMC 2021-22 continues the transition to a more unified and integrated calendar that facilitates the connection of the football pyramid and provides greater opportunities to maximise the potential of the game. Notwithstanding the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, it is a further step in the transition to the goals and objectives outlined in the XI Principles.

The DMC 2021-22 may be subject to change by Football Australia to ensure that it is able to adapt to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the transition to a COVID-safe environment, and as further opportunities and enhancements are identified by Football Australia in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders.

We acknowledge the support of the Domestic Match Calendar Working Member Federation Group, all Member Federations, the APL, and the PFA for their cooperation, input and support throughout this process.

Any queries regarding the DMC 2021-22 may be directed in the first instance to legal@footballaustralia.com.au.

Yours sincerely

Football Australia



James Johnson
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