

20
FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA

20 national PARTICIPATION REPORT

## INTRODUCTION


#### Abstract

If $\mathbf{2 0 2 0}$ was the year we set our foundations for success and a vision for the future, 2021 has most certainly been a year of implementation and one filled with action for Football Australia. Throughout the course of the year, our XI Principles for the future of Australian football have acted as a guiding star, providing strategic and operational guidance as we look to fulfil our bold and innovative $\mathbf{1 5}$-year vision.


One of the most pleasing aspects I have seen during the year has been the return of community football right across the country. After such a difficult year in 2020, seeing people of all ages enjoying the game once again brought positivity and hope back to the sport and Australian society more broadly. Despite, sporadic lockdowns across the country still creating significant challenges for the game, including added pressure on our valuable volunteers, I was extremely proud of the way in which we united as a game and adapted as best that we could to the circumstances.

Some highlights from our 2021 Participation Census include:

## Outdoor Football

- Nationally, total participation increased by $20 \%$ Year on Year, from 1,181,931 to 1,421,804.
- A key highlight for the year was participation in Outdoor Football increased by 16\% or 77,107 participants Year on Year, exceeding pre-COVID-19 (2019) levels by $1 \%$ with Senior Football in particular 10\% up compared with 2019 pre-COVID.


## Social \& Futsal

- Both Futsal and Social/Summer participation have grown Year on Year. Social and Summer program participation having surpassed pre-COVID 2019 figures.


## Coaches \& Volunteers

- National Coach Workforce of over 200 Participation Officers established to deliver Sporting Schools, MiniRoos \& Junior Participation programs.
- Coach registrations increased by 7\%, almost in line with increases in Outdoor Football participation and Referee registrations also increased by 5\%.
- Volunteers increased by 9\% Year on Year.


## Schools and Community Programs

- School football participation has grown by 151,088 (64\%) - 44,380 of which are sporting school participants and 116,882 are schools' competition players.
- Community program participation has decreased due to the impact of COVID-19 and the inability to deliver these programs effectively, due to COVID complications, at A-League matches, or through gala days, fan days and community visits.


## Women and Girls

- Women and Girls represented 174,380 participants in outdoor football, social and registered futsal, up from 143,873 in 2020, representing a growth of over $21 \%$ or 30,507 players.


## National Indigenous Advisory Group (NIAG)

- Specific Diversity has more than doubled to over 25,000 players. Particularly in Indigenous \& Multicultural football which has shown an increase of almost 12,000 players this year.


## 2021 FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION KEY INSIGHTS

| PROGRAM | \% CHANGE | $\mathbf{2 0 2 1}$ | $\mathbf{2 0 2 0}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Outdoor Football | $16 \%$ | 547,751 | 470,644 |
| Futsal | $39 \%$ | 54,215 | 39,130 |
| Social Football | $27 \%$ | 133,148 | 104,785 |
| Registered Coaches | $7 \%$ | 45,619 | 42,512 |
| Registered Referees | $5 \%$ | 11,127 | 10,592 |
| Volunteers | $\mathbf{9 \%}$ | 27,346 | 25,168 |
| Schools Football | $\mathbf{2 1 \%}$ | 387,457 | 236,369 |
| Community Football <br> Programs | $\mathbf{1 0 8 \%}$ | $\mathbf{1 9 0 , 0 0 1}$ | 240,644 |
| Specific Diversity and <br> Inclusion Programs | $\mathbf{2 0 \%}$ | $\mathbf{2 5 , 1 4 0}$ | 12,087 |
| TOTAL PARTICIPATION 2021 | $\mathbf{1 , 4 2 1 , 8 0 4}$ | $\mathbf{1 , 1 8 1 , 9 3 1}$ |  |

2021 was a progressive year for Football Australia on many fronts.
The loss of commercial partners throughout 2019 and 2020, which included the expiration of our broadcast deal with Fox Sports Australia and of our naming rights partnership for the Socceroos, was exacerbated by COVID-19. Given the financial state of the organisation at the end of 2020, the focus of the first half of 2021 was to create stability and set ourselves up for financial and sporting success.

We have reimagined and restructured our value proposition to one that is partner-centric, focused on creating genuine partnerships through alignment of values and aspirations, to ensure return on investment and on objectives. This approach has yielded extremely positive results for the organisation in the last 18 months, with some of Australia's most recognisable blue-chip companies joining the Australian football family. Some highlights include:

A new three-year partnership with Priceline Pharmacy concluded at the end of 2020, provided a launch pad into our 2021 commercial activities. In January 2021, Perfection Fresh Australia became a partner of the MiniRoos program before we signed expanded and extended multi-year partnerships with rebel and Pantene. Both have been long-term partners of Football Australia and are committed to supporting the growth of women's and grassroots football across the nation.

These partnerships laid the foundations for the most significant sponsorship in Australian football history when Commonwealth Bank became the official naming rights partner of the Matildas. We see the partnership with Commonwealth Bank as an exciting synergy of two of Australia's great contemporary brands and a wonderful representation of our bold new vision for the sport coming to life. Commonwealth Bank have been a great supporter of women's sport in Australia and we are excited about the opportunity to continue to grow women's football as we set out to become the centre of women's football in the Asia-Pacific region.

We were also delighted to welcome 10 ViacomCBS to the Australian football family. This is the first time Football Australia has been able to secure a direct broadcast deal with a commercial free-to-air partner and will provide the game with vital exposure across Network 10 and Paramount+. The recent match between the Commonwealth Bank Matildas and Brazil gave Network 10 its best Saturday night performance of 2021.

The relationship with Commonwealth Bank and the broadcast deal with 10 ViacomCBS were ground-breaking partnerships for the game and represent a new era of football in Australia. Each partnership has played a crucial role in turning around the commercial performance of the organisation at a particularly important time as we continue our recovery from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 related travel restrictions have had a significant impact on international football with travel restrictions making it impossible for international football to be played in Australia for the majority of 2021.

Despite this, the Socceroos secured a slice of global football history when they defeated Oman (3-1) in October, becoming the first nation in FIFA World Cup ${ }^{\text {TM }}$ qualifying history to win 11 consecutive matches in a single qualification campaign. This is a phenomenal achievement for the team which has played all their matches in 2021 under strict COVID-19 restrictions while overseas. The Socceroos are continuing their quest to qualify for FIFA World Cup Qatar $2022^{\text {™ }}$

We had identified the need for the Commonwealth Bank Matildas to play more matches against world-class opponents in the lead-up to major tournaments, so when the team convened again under new Head Coach Tony Gustavsson this year, it gave us an opportunity to implement our new strategy to create better depth of players and ensure that the team had the right preparation to peak at the Tokyo Olympics. Prior to the Tokyo Olympics, the Matildas would play matches against Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden which are ranked in the 'top 10' by FIFA.

An impressive Tokyo Olympics campaign saw the Commonwealth Bank Matildas achieve a best-ever result at an Olympics, finishing 4th, with the Olyroos putting in credible performances, including a memorable victory against Argentina in their opening match. Significantly, we saw the emergence of the future generation of players. For the Matildas, these included standout performances from Mary Fowler and Teagan Micah; Marco Tilio, at 19 years and 333 days, became our youngest goal scorer for the Olyroos at an Olympics.

Off the field, both teams achieved significant milestones, with 89 million 'impressions' across our social and digital platforms. From a broadcast perspective, the teams reached a combined cumulative broadcast audience of 9.7 million. This included a peak of 2.32 million viewers for the Matildas match against Sweden in the semi-final, and the largest average audience for an Australian women's sporting team at 1.87 million viewers. The Olyroos' peak audience came in its match against Spain, with 1.97 million viewers tuning in. These are numbers that the Australian game has rarely seen in our 100-year history.

We launched our ambitious Legacy ' 23 plan, which aims to deliver immediate and long-term community benefits and economic impacts from Australia hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. It is our ambitious plan for our nation to build back through football, and to realise enduring and exciting benefits as a result of hosting this incredible event.

On the back of this plan, we welcomed the Federal Government's decision to provide $\$ 12$ million over two years to support the progression of elite women's football in Australia, as well as community engagement through the world game to cater for our vast community, including those from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds. These vital funds will go a long way towards supporting our high-performance objectives for the Commonwealth Bank Matildas, Commonwealth Bank Young Matildas and Commonwealth Bank Junior Matildas.

The establishment of the Domestic Match Calendar 2021/22 (DMC 2021/22) reconnects the Australian football pyramid through the alignment of domestic competitions. Significantly, we were able to agree with the APL that the A-Leagues will break for the applicable FIFA Men's and Women's International Windows, as specified in the International Match Calendar. The designation of aligned transfer windows within the DMC 2021/22 was the first step to the implementation of the new Domestic Transfer System following the release of the Domestic Transfer System Transformation White Paper in early 2021. We are now well placed to develop the necessary regulatory framework and will look to advance these efforts in 2022.

The allocation of a placeholder in the DMC 2021/22 for the future National Second Tier is a significant milestone which takes the competition from concept towards becoming reality in 2022. It means that a finalised model and other relevant elements can be developed. We have always maintained that it is not a matter of if, but when, and we are excited to move into the next phase of planning.

The 2021 FFA Cup Round of 32 saw the competition transition to weekend football and showcased on our new broadcaster, live and on free-to-air tv. We want the FFA Cup to inspire the Australian football community, and now fans will have an opportunity to follow their local team, not just across Australia but also into Asia, with a preliminary round slot in the AFC Champions League to be awarded to the winning club. This year will also be the last time the FFA Cup will be known by that name, with the competition building on the enhancements of 2021 and transitioning towards a new name and fresh identity in 2022.

More than a year has passed since Australia and New Zealand were awarded the rights to host the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia \& New Zealand $2023{ }^{\text {™ }}$. Preparations for tournament hit significant milestones this year with the appointment of David Beeche as Chief Executive Officer of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia \& New Zealand $2023^{\text {TM }}$ and the announcement of the nine Host Cities selected by FIFA to host matches - congratulations to Adelaide, Auckland, Brisbane, Dunedin, Hamilton, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Wellington. We are delighted that the tournament will have matches being played across the entire breadth of Australia and are looking forward to the fixtures being announced so that Australian football fans can begin to make plans.

Being awarded the co-hosting rights to the FIFA Women's World Cup $2023^{\text {TM }}$ provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We want to elevate the women's game here in Australia to a new level through the Women's World Cup and our Legacy '23 plan, which we launched at Australian Parliament House in February at an event attended by Senator Nita Green, Zali Steggall MP and Federal Minister for Sport Hon. Richard Colbeck, articulates the opportunities that come with hosting the largest women's sporting event in the world and the biggest global event in Australia since Sydney 2000.

The creation of football's first-ever National Indigenous Advisory Group (NIAG) is a significant milestone for our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In the short term, the NIAG will provide expertise and advice on the implementation of Football Australia's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We have also appointed a role within the organisation to lead on our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The role is responsible for developing and implementing Football Australia's 'Reflect' RAP, for supporting the NIAG, and for working closely with a range of internal and external stakeholders to proactively develop strategies for reconciliation initiatives.

The unbundling of the professional leagues from Football Australia at the end of 2020 will forever change the face of Australian football. The new model sees Football Australia retain its regulatory functions in respect of the professional leagues as the Australian Professional Leagues (APL) takes control over their operational and commercial direction. We believe that the model will open possibilities for much needed investment into the professional game and we are excited about the opportunities which the new model presents. Over the course of 2021, we have taken steps to implement various elements of the agreement allowing for the 2021/22 season of our professional leagues to commence under the new arrangement. We will continue to collaborate with the APL to ensure we create an environment that allows our professional leagues to thrive.

The current year was a massive one of implementation for Football Australia. Over the course of 2021, we have been able to stabilise the organisation and lay a solid platform for growth and transformation. We anticipate that the broad agenda for the organisation we saw in 2021 will enable us to scale back our agenda in 2022 to focus on key strategic initiatives.

At the centre of the XI Principles for the future of Australian football, is the recognition of the strength and diversity of the Australian football family. We are a melting pot of two million participants ( 1.4 million now in 2021) represented by over 200 different cultures. No other sport within the Australian sporting landscape offers the type of inherent diversity which football does. This diversity in culture, ideas and experience makes us strong and prepares us well for the challenges which lie ahead of us.

The way in which the Australian football community has conducted itself this year, supported by our Member Federations, has been exemplary. Our 2021 participation figures are a credit to the efforts of our Member Federations, A-League Clubs, Associations, Zones, Community Clubs, and large volunteer base.

On behalf of Football Australia, we want to thank you all for your commitment, dedication, and support. We have been able to navigate our way through a difficult period because of a spirit of collaboration borne from a deep love of our game. You can all be extremely proud of your efforts; they have certainly inspired us.


James Johnson

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA

# 2021 <br> FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA <br> NATIONAL SUMMARY <br> TOTAL PARTICIPATION <br> $1,421,804$ <br> 20\% Growth on 2020 

WOMEN \& GIRLS PARTICIPATION 174,380
INCLUDES OUTDOOR, REGISTERED FUTSAL \& SOCIAL

## . I LEAGUES

TOTAL PARTICIPATION 301,317
INCLUDES SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY EVENTS \& PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 547,751 PARTICIPANTS


 REGISTERED COACHES 80\% MALE $20 \%$ FEMALE N
(1)27.34.6 VOLUNTEERS
53\% MALE
47\% FEMALE

OTHER FORMATS

*Total numbers include male, female and gender unspecified


## 2021 NSW SUMWARY

 NSW
total participation
21\% GROWTH ON 2020

WOMEN \& GIRLS PARTICIPATION 80,022
INCLUDES OUTDOOR, REGISTERED FUTSAL \& SOCIAL

## . I LEAGUES

TOTAL PARTICIPATION 79,558

INCLUDES SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY EVENTS \& PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 243,035 PARTICIPANTS



SPECIFIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS

```
1,305
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1,305
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Includes programs specifically for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
mmunities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander \& All Ability participant


## COMMUNITY EVENTS \&

 PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES61,548 PARTICIPANTS

## 2021 VIC SUMMARY



OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 67,370 PARTICIPANTS

## 361 CLUBS

22\% growth on 2020


## OTHER FORMATS



SPECIFIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS 2,326
Includes programs specifically for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
Incluaes programs specirically for Cuitural and Linguisticaliy Diverse
Communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander \& All Ability participants

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\begin{array}{|cc}
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\text { 54,052 } \\
\text { SCHOOLPROGRAMS }
\end{array} \\
\mathbf{+} & \text { SCHOOLS TOTAL } \\
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## 2021 QLD SUMMARY



## TOTAL PARTICIPATION

37\%
252,663


OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL
78,449
PARTICIPANTS


## OTHER FORMATS



[^0]
## 2021 WA SUMMARY



TOTAL PARTICIPATION 160,321

11\%
GROWTH ON 2020

## . I LEAGUES

TOTAL PARTICIPATION 52,550

INCLUDES SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY EVENTS \& PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

## OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 40,180 PARTICIPANTS

 32,579 MALE
(81\% OF TOTAL)

MTNJROOS
15,666 PARTICIPANTS


12,770 PARTICIPANTS


247
CLUBS


N


REGISTERED REFEREES
93\% MALE
7\% FEMALE

7,591 FEMALE (19\% OF TOTAL)


## OTHER FORMATS


*Total numbers include male, female and gender unspecified

## 2021 NNSW SUMQARY



## TOTAL PARTICIPATION

$$
88,905
$$

OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 51,933 PARTICIPANTS



## OTHER FORMATS



[^1]
## 2021 SA SUMMARY



FOOTBALL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TOTAL PARTICIPATION
86,070

WOMEN \& GIRLS PARTICIPATION 6,808
INCLUDES OUTDOOR, REGISTERED FUTSAL \& SOCIAL

# . I LEAGUES 

TOTAL PARTICIPATION 32,522
INCLUDES SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY EVENTS \& PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 35,006 <br> PARTICIPANTS

## 2021 ACT SUMMARY

TOTAL PARTICIPATION
3\%
GROWTH ON 2020

WOMEN \& GIRLS PARTICIPATION 7,696
INCLUDES OUTDOOR, REGISTERED FUTSAL \& SOCIAL

## OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 16,169 PARTICIPANTS

47
CLUBS

## 11,658 mate

(72\% OF TOTAL)

MiNTHSOS 6,962 PARTICIPANTS


YOUTH 4,846 PARTICIPANTS



REGISTERED REFEREES 79\% MALE
21\% FEMALE

750
volunteras
43\% MALE
57\% FEMALE

## OTHER FORMATS





SPECIFIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS 300
Includes programs specifically for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander \& All Ability participants

4,196
SCHOOLPROGRAMS SCHOOLS TOTAL $+{ }^{+}=$
0
school compertions

COMMUNITY EVENTS \&
PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

## 2021 TAS SUMMARY

NO
FOOTBALL TASMANIA

TOTAL PARTICIPATION 31,640

39\% GROWTH ON 2020

WOMEN \& GIRLS PARTICIPATION 4,958
INCLUDES OUTDOOR, REGISTERED FUTSAL \& SOCIAL

OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL
12,224 PARTICIPANTS


## OTHER FORMATS



COMMUNITY EVENTS \& PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENGES $1,6: 5$ PARTICIPANTS

FOOTBALL NORTHERN TERRITORY

TOTAL PARTICIPATION
16,469

34\% GROWTH ON 2020

## OUTDOOR AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

## 3,385 PARTICIPANTS

2,548 MALE
(75\% OF TOTAL)

MHNTHOS
1,685 PARTICIPANTS

$14 \%$ growth on 2020

WOMEN \& GIRLS PARTICIPATION 1,065
INCLUDES OUTDOOR, REGISTERED FUTSAL \& SOCIAL


YOUTH
823 PARTICIPANTS


REGISTERED REFFEREES
86\% MALE
14\% FEMALE

17

## CLUBS



SPECIFIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS

$$
4,412
$$

Includes programs specifically for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
Communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander \& All Ability participan
Communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander \& All Ability participants

## OTHER FORMATS



5,360
SCHOOL PROGRAMS SCHOOLS TOTAL
$+\quad=$
271
$=$
6,651
PARTICIPANTS
SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

## COMMUNITY EVENTS \&

PROMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

- 156

PARTICIPANTS


[^0]:    *Total numbers include male, female and gender unspecified

[^1]:    *Total numbers include male, female and gender unspecified

