



AFL Barwon

Netball Review Proposal – (Club Feedback Stage)

AFL Barwon | September, 2017

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The Netball review is to examine the structure and format of all Netball competition structures, player payments and junior pathways to design and recommend a model for the future.

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The Netball review is to examine the structure and format of all current AFL Barwon Netball competition structures, competitiveness and junior pathways and recommend a model for the future.

The review has been put in place to help address some of the major issues identified in the current structures. Some of the issues known were; The retention of juniors into senior netball, fixturing all games in a timely fashion, escalating player payments, growth of junior netball, umpiring, and competitiveness of games

The netball review will ensure that there continues to be participation growth and club sustainability. Other key focuses will be to maximise facilities, identify preferred junior club models, creating a regional approach to junior pathways and umpiring.



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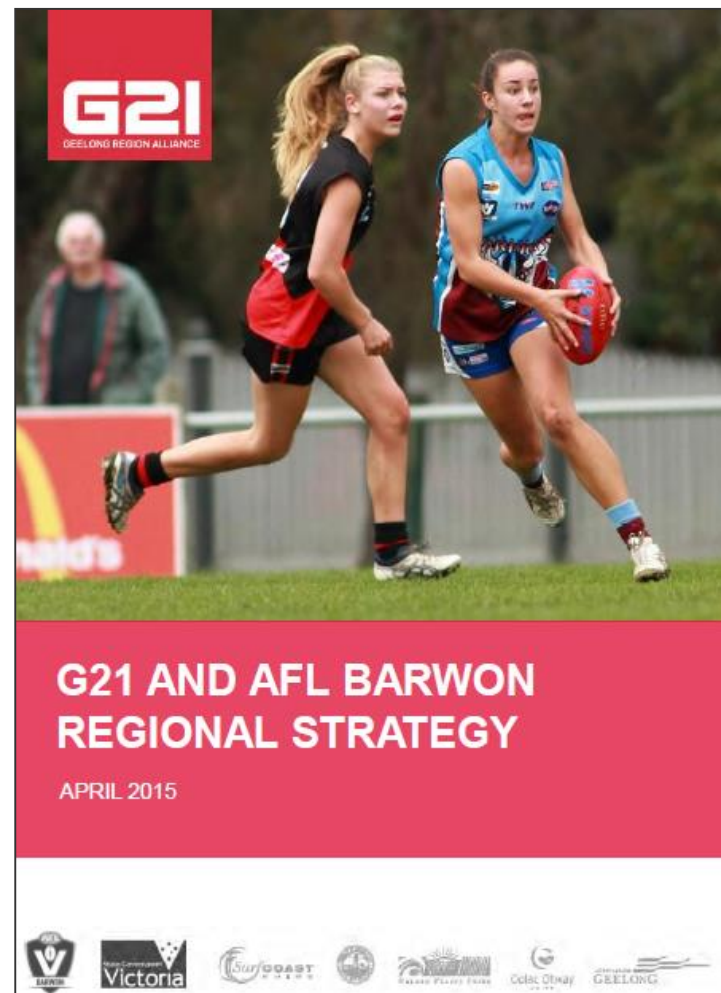
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The netball review will align with the G21 and AFL Barwon Regional Strategy that provides a framework to support the future development, governance and growth of football and club based netball throughout the region over the next 10 years.

The strategy is a collaborative planning project between government authorities in the G21 region, AFL Barwon, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and other key stakeholders.

The strategy document identifies six strategic priorities across the region, with the first one to “support the capacity of the building of clubs and their people”. This priority includes – support club development and policy development; review competition structures; and continued implementation of Club Health Checks



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PRIORITY 1

Support the capacity building of clubs and their people

One of the many roles of the AFL Barwon Football Development Managers (FDM's) is to coordinate training and education programs aimed at building the capacity of volunteers. However, the significant gaps in volunteer capacity and understanding of administration cannot be addressed by the FDMs alone. The FDMs require access to a suite of professional partners to support clubs with governance, financial management, strategic planning and general administration.

To further address gaps in governance processes and volunteer capacity, investigation into paid administration models is also essential. Options for part time employment, traineeships or shared roles between clubs needs to be provided for club consideration with AFL Barwon offering guidance on recruitment and general employment conditions.

Clubs also need to be supported to capitalise on participation growth opportunities in NAB AFL Auskick, youth girls, access all abilities programs and AFL 9's. For example, linking to schools to access facilities, offering a summer NAB AFL Auskick competition (particular for clubs with weaker junior numbers to recruit junior players) or creating pathways for female players from NAB AFL Auskick to senior ranks, provide options for clubs to grow their player and member base. However, a clubs' capability to capitalise on these opportunities is again dependent on volunteer capacity and ability to strategically plan for expansion both on and off the field.

Any club development and expansion of the game must include support to game officials. This includes umpire recruitment and retention policies and programs, provision of appropriate training facilities, support for umpires schools programs, review of umpiring financial structures and umpire payments, expanding development pathways and encouraging club involvement in developing umpires.

The structure of football and netball across the region will also need to change if the sports are to continue to grow. As identified in the AFL Barwon Strategic Plan, consideration needs to be given to Sunday competitions, offering junior programs over the summer months, changing match schedules for junior games, and sharing of players between clubs.

At the junior level, participation trends across clubs vary with several clubs glutted with numbers while others struggle to attract new players.

Ensuring equality in numbers of players across junior ranks and the introduction of a salary cap and/or points system to discourage mass importation of players were identified by AFL Barwon Clubs through their Club Health Checks as two options to grow participation.

Competition equalisation is a priority for AFL Barwon. The competition and club structure is currently under review and it is the intent of AFL Barwon to support and retain all existing clubs whilst achieving this equalisation. The introduction of a salary cap and/or points system to remediate disparity between clubs is also being investigated by AFL Victoria. This is through a state wide strategic initiative that includes representation by the AFL Barwon General Manager.

Strategic directions to support the capacity building of clubs and their people.

- 1.1 AFL Barwon to complete strategic review of current club and league structures and work with key stakeholders to assist club sustainability and competition equalisation. Review to consider movement between Divisions to ensure club competitiveness.
- 1.2 AFL Barwon to support clubs to develop five year strategic plans to improve operational performance and guide business objectives around facility and asset management, financial planning and club participation and growth.
- 1.3 AFL Barwon and Netball Victoria partner to review competition structure to include night / alternate days matches to accommodate growth in participation and maximise use of existing grounds, courts and facilities.
- 1.4 Establish models for sharing of players and transitioning players between clubs across junior grades to ensure equity in participant numbers.
- 1.5 Continued Implementation of Club Health Check process on an annual basis to measure club development and identify governance, volunteer capacity and administration gaps and implement training and support to address these gaps.
- 1.6 Engage a network of professional partners to support FDMs to address club governance gaps and club volunteer technical understanding of strategic and financial planning.
- 1.7 Support GFUL and CDUA umpire recruitment and retention policies and programs including establishing development pathways and identifying initiatives for clubs to actively promote umpiring to their member base.
- 1.8 Provide education to clubs that encapsulates policy and procedure needs for implementing both healthy sports environments and improved governance processes.
- 1.9 Investigate options for paid administration models and traineeships, providing guidance to clubs on general employment conditions and facilitating opportunities for clubs to share administration costs.



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1.1

AFL Barwon to complete strategic review of current club and league structures and work with key stakeholders to assist club sustainability and competition equalisation.



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Project Objectives

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This project shall provide AFL Barwon, with quantitative statistical data, informed local knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing football in the area to guide the establishment of appropriate recommendations.

- The following areas will be discussed with all stakeholders:
- Participation statistics (Netball and community)
- Competition structures and the current level of competitiveness
- Player Pathways including Net Set Go to junior club relationship status
- Fixturing
- Age Groups including boys netball
- Grading process
- Facility use and allocations
- Team per clubs spread including;
 - Mega clubs
 - Small clubs
 - Clubs with no juniors

- Junior players match loads
- Exploring possibility of the points system/ Salary Cap on Netball Structures
- Coaching, Recruiting and Training practices
- Umpiring, both AFL Barwon and Club
- Representative Netball. Player talent pathways. League Representation (BJNC), Geelong Netball Club and Barwon Region

This project has been identified as a priority project with significant implications to AFL Barwon responsibilities and is consistent with the AFL Barwon's strategic direction of managing the future of netball in the region. It was also identified as a significant project that needed to be undertaken from feedback from all stakeholders as part of the senior football restructuring project that has been undertaken in the region.

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Saturday Grading of Juniors

- The original survey responses indicated 41% support for a fully graded competition.
- During the club visits this was not supported as much.
- Our current competitions competitiveness differed between the GFNL and BFNL. With the GFNL more satisfied with the current competitiveness in comparison to the BFNL.
- Teams not fielding sides and creating byes is becoming a big issue and needs to be addressed.

Concerns for clubs with Junior Grading:

- Coaching from Senior Players could be affected
- Player development opportunities
- Losing the club feel
- Strain on Volunteers
- Strain on Umpiring

Comments:

"I think the AFL Barwon Junior Netball competition is strong as is and allows development of players at all level and interest-competitive and social. I would not recommend further change to this"

"Will make division more competitive"

"Yes but not at the expense of clubs splitting juniors away from seniors"

"I believe a graded competition would work really well in the juniors. It may seem hard because people might complain about playing at different grounds to where the football and senior Netball is but I don't really think it affects juniors so much. I think between the leagues in Geelong grading junior netball would make sense. It would allow clubs to grow instead of seeing the same top 5 clubs always in finals every year"

"I absolutely believe that junior netball should stay with the club and with the seniors. In a small community, asking parents to travel in different directions for football and netball would deter participation in the sport. It also fragments the club. Clubs thrive when parents and players are together at the one venue."

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Winning Margins:

Based on the survey results 55.5% believe winning margin should not exceed 20 goals in Netball. Below is the percentages of games won by over 20 goals in 2017

BFNL Juniors 2017			
Round	Games played	Games over 20 goals	Percentage
1	29	15	51%
2	29	14	48%
3	29	7	24%
4	29	14	48%
5	29	14	48%
6	29	8	27%
7	29	12	41%
8	29	11	38%
9	29	10	34%
10	29	13	45%
11	29	9	31%
12	29	12	41%
13	29	12	41%
14	29	10	34%
15	29	11	38%
16	29	13	45%
17	29	14	48%
18	29	10	34%
	522	209	40%

GFNL Juniors			
Round	Games played	Games over 20 goals	Percentage
1	37	12	32%
2	37	14	38%
3	37	11	30%
4	37	16	43%
5	37	11	30%
6	37	10	27%
7	37	10	27%
8	37	10	27%
9	37	15	40%
10	37	14	38%
11	37	12	32%
12	37	12	32%
13	37	18	49%
14	37	9	24%
15	37	9	24%
16	37	14	38%
17	37	14	38%
18	37	18	48%
	666	229	34%

In the BFNL 1 in every 2.5 matches there is a game with a margin over 20 goals

In the GFNL 1 in every 3 matches there is a game with a margin over 20 goals



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Friday Night Grading:

- 34.6% believe that in grading no points should be awarded
- 11.5% 2 points & Percentage, 15.4% 4 Points & Percentage and 11.5% 4 Points and no percentage
- 65% surveyed believe that teams should be able to be repositioned after grading has been completed
- With majority giving an extra two weeks to allow extra grading changes if applicable.

Friday Night Netball:

- Club happy to have Friday night netball at club during bye weeks (Geelong Home Games) to avoid playing school holidays and give the opportunity to the Friday night teams to potentially play at the club.
- It was mentioned by some clubs that they would be happy to switch the Tuesday and Friday night competitions around as long as they had plenty of notice.
- It's hard to get Under 17's to commit to Friday due to employment etc.

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Regionalisation of Junior Competitions

- Clubs were in favour of regionalisation but only for lower grades. Mainly 11 & Under
- Potential lack of competitiveness
- Ocean Grove has been a success with the Tuesday night 11 & Under competition. However have seen clubs move sides into Kardinia Park for the stronger competition.

Comments:

"Wonderful. And highly supported and successful"

"I think this would be awesome- would benefit local sport and make it easier for families and players"

" This is a good idea for 11's and Div 3/4/5 teams"

"This is a good decision, as long as the competition is appropriate for all players"



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Saturday Fixturing:

- It was recognised that more Saturday time slots were needed into the future.
- Division 4 clashes with the Premier Division with limited time slots
- Excess seniors in off season saw a new senior competition brought forward in 2017 – Div 4.
- Sunday Netball was not supported

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Capping Junior Teams:

We had a mixed response in regards to capping team numbers. From a club perspective majority of clubs don't internally cap junior numbers.

- 52% of clubs believe clubs should not be capped with 32% believing it should be looked at.
- 90% of clubs don't support capping the amount of juniors allowed to play in senior matches
- Majority of club indicate if they are turning away players Senior or Junior they provide players with details of other opportunities at other clubs.

Comments:

"We believe in providing the opportunity to all who want to play"

"Absolutely, it gets ridiculous when clubs submit excess over 4 teams into Friday night competition and yet their neighbour club cannot fill 2 teams into current junior club competition"

"Clubs choice if they can get enough volunteers for all their teams. Some players will not play rather than go elsewhere. We don't want to encourage this"



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Player Payments:

The increasing nature of player payments has ignited the discussion around measures that could potentially be put in place to help the sustainability of Netball clubs along with restricting the ability of clubs to “buy” premierships.

- 61% of Clubs have a player payment Budget
- 100% of club only spend on their Premier Division
- Currently 43% spend \$5,000-\$10,000 a further 14% spend \$10,000-\$15,000 while a further 7% pay above that.
- Most clubs believe that they need to pay players to be competitive
- 80% believe that some regulatory systems needs to be in place however most clubs believe a points system is a better option.
- 20% of club believe that no system is needed within our leagues

Comments:

“No Player payments would be good”

“Players are asking for too much and clubs need to put proper value on players”

“Some local players monetary requests are getting quite ridiculous. Some seem to forget this is community sport”

“Creates loyalty and development of juniors for future senior players”

“Yes moving forward in the competition to avoid team stacking”

“There is not a system across the state- to put one in place has the potential to detract from the competition- having high quality players benefits the league”

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Player Points:

As per previous slide 80% believe a system needs to be in place. Clubs believe points would be a better solution then the salary cap.

- A flagged alternative was to limit VNL recruits into the club on a yearly basis
- Questions raised with a points systems in Netball:
 - How would we regulate it?
 - How many players would it consist of?
 - Extra strain on club personnel
 - No technology support currently through MyNetball
 - How would we manage it?
 - Would this see players move to other leagues without a points system?



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Player Movement:

The retention of players at clubs has been analysed of movement between leagues and teams in the past.

Seniors players not retained over the past 5 seasons in total:

- 50% of clubs lost 1-3 players
- 18% of clubs lost 4-6 players
- 18% of clubs lost 7-9 players
- 13% of clubs lost 10+ players

Reasons for leaving

- Success in a lower league
- To play in the strong comp
- Money
- Living arrangements

Clubs report Junior retention is not an issue.

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Umpiring:

The Current structure of Netball umpiring in the region needs a full review.

- 75% are happy with the current allocation of panel umpires
- 60% said they could fill panel if we weren't able to
- In the survey the slight majority believed the panel umpiring rate of \$45 was satisfactory, however during the club visits majority were for an increase to panel payments, to attract and retain umpires.
- 97% of clubs have a club mentor, but believe they need further training and education
- Upskilling and Badging of umpires is seen as an issue

Overwhelming support for the clubs to invest more money into mentoring, education and development of umpires through the league.

Comments:

"We understand the difficulties of having a shortage of umpires, but think perhaps increasing their pay may attract more umpires from the private system"

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Coaching (Other Findings):

- 95% pay Senior Coaches
- 22% pay some of their junior coaches
- 26% seek outside coaching support

Representative Program:

- 83% believe we have a strong player program
- Running of the program and coaching needs to be addressed including the senior teams

Other Findings:

- 70% of clubs have a junior pathway policy
- 62% didn't support AFL Barwon creating a Junior Match load policy
- 67% have a Net Set Go program
- 50% would support a boys competition

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Saturday Junior Competitiveness / Grading

- Change grading structure, 2 points and 0% carried over
- Grading will continue to be set after round 4, but changes can be made to teams up until round 8 if required

FIXTURING

- Saturday Junior Structure to remain the same (Div 1 & Div 2 Juniors on a Saturday)
- If a Division has more than 3 or more teams missing a new fixture will be created to eliminate byes.
- All teams MUST field from Division 1 down
- 4 points will be awarded for a bye in Saturday competitions
- Change names back to Alphabetical grades (A Grade, B Grade, C Grade, D Grade and E Grade)
- Continue discussions around grading (monitor margins and fixtures)

FIXTURING (Cont...)

- Clubs to host Friday night matches when Geelong Cats play at home. Only during H/A rounds not grading

Regionalisation

- Ocean Grove venue for Under 11's to continue
- Further venues to be explored as competitions grow
- New multi court venue (12 courts) in Armstrong creek will help in 5 years time

Player Payments & Points System

- Introduce both a salary cap and points system in season 2019
- For the 2018 season we will release the framework so it can be shadowed during 2018
- The Framework for Both Salary Cap and Points System will be based on the Football system
- Netball Victoria will help establish the Framework with AFL Barwon
- The Salary Cap for 2019 will be \$15,000 and reviewed annually
- The Points system limits will be set after the Framework is finalised
- We will hold discussions with neighbouring leagues when establishing the Framework
- Salary Cap and Points systems framework to be setup for testing 2018 season
- Continued discussion to be had around points and salary cap figures

UMPIRING

- AFL Barwon to increase the budget for Umpire co-ordinators and mentors
- Adopt Position Descriptions for Co-ordinator and Mentors with clear KPI's such as clubs visits, umpires seen etc.
- Establish a travel fee for panel Umpires
- Pay-scale \$35 (Club umpire), \$45 (Panel Trainee), \$50 (C Badge Panel) & \$55 (A & B Badge Panel)
- PD's created for umpiring positions within AFL Barwon Netball Umpiring

REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

- Continue to Support Barwon Junior Championships
- Continue and support Junior Rep Committee
- Senior Representative teams to ID Coach for both Leagues and review selection process
 - Enter State Championships each year
 - Play Interleague when applicable

OTHER PROPOSALS

- Boys Netball will sit with Associations in Geelong
- Coaching and Umpire education Sessions to be arranged in conjunction with Netball Victoria on an annual basis

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- Club meeting Wednesday 13th September.
- Feedback from clubs by Wednesday 4th October.
- Working party to consider feedback and make any changes at a meeting on Thursday 5th October.
- Final ratification on Monday 16th of October at AFL Barwon Commission Meeting .
- Notification to clubs after AFL Barwon Commission Meeting