

Football West
JUNIOR FOOTBALL REVIEW August
2023

CONFIDENTIAL
REPORT

Executive Summary

Engagement

Elite Business Performance (Consultant), was contracted by Football West on 30 March 2023 to undertake one component of the *WA Junior Strategy Development Project (Project)* - designed to establish a strategic framework for the development of all junior football in Western Australia for the next 5 years.

Scope

The Consultant's brief was to;

- meet with relevant Football West staff (Project Group);
- prepare for and facilitate a number of stakeholder workshops;
- collate and report on the data obtained from the workshops and a separate survey conducted by Football West.

Importantly, the Consultant was **not** engaged to prepare the abovementioned strategic framework, only to complete an important component thereof. In saying this, the Consultant has however undertaken additional work/research and makes recommendations for FW to consider in the broader context of the development of the said strategic framework.

Methodology

Our methodology involved a 6-stage process comprising:

- Stage 1 - Data/Documentation Review
- Stage 2 - Workshop/Briefing with Football West Staff
- Stage 3 - Consultation Forums
- Stage 4 - Desktop Research
- Stage 5 - Survey open to the football community
- Stage 6 - Collation and synthesis of all information in the preparation of this Report.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The Football West Junior development programs and competition structures have been successful in achieving some of the intended outcomes and objectives to varying degrees.

Miniroos is considered by many participants to be working well, providing an entry level point for young children wishing to play football.

The Junior NPL competition structure is in some respects restrictive. A more inclusive competition structure that allows players to progress to the top tier of the junior competition in Western Australia, without the need to transfer to an "NPL" club should be adopted through a staged implementation over a 2-3 year period to enable clubs to adapt to the changes.

Table 1 comprises Findings. Comprehensive comments on each of the findings are particularised in the body of this Report.

Table 1: Findings

Findings	
Finding 1	The fundamental issue identified through the workshops was with the current overall junior competition structure not within the broader junior development initiatives.
Finding 2	Talent Identification processes, in the initial stages, is an essential role for clubs and when implemented, coaches and players can progress with Football West services and support.
Finding 3	<i>Survey</i> - 75% of respondents to the survey were involved at a community participation level.
Finding 4	The NPL has not fully delivered on its planned objectives.
Finding 5	The NPL has created an “artificial elite” status with criteria, that a number of the Junior NPL clubs cannot and do not deliver on.
Finding 6	There is a wide variety of quality of play within the Junior NPL competition which has led to some uncompetitive games.
Finding 7	There is no promotion and relegation system in place for clubs to move out of the Junior NPL competition and more importantly into the Junior NPL competition.
Finding 8	There was minimal comment on and therefore concern about the Mini-roo’s competition. There were positive comments in general with respect to the structure and development opportunities presented by the Mini-roo’s competition.
Finding 9	Player pathways which include the Junior NPL competition structure, can be complex and restrictive and often mean that to advance through the pathway, players must be prepared to change clubs.
Finding 10	There was concern that the player pathway was fragmented and unclear.
Finding 11	The Junior NPL geographical “spread” of games within divisions can cause angst amongst parents – a lot of travel is involved.
Finding 12	The current Junior NPL gives a club the impetus to plan “whole of club” development.
Finding 13	Allowing players to play “up” or “down” out of their age group appears to allow for appropriate player development.
Finding 14	The move to the Junior NPL competition structure has not been as successful as anticipated.

Findings	
Finding 15	There appears to be a very good understanding and subsequent practice within clubs on how to ensure that they are inclusive especially with respect to issues such as discrimination.
Finding 16	All major regional centres have competition structures that meet local demand.
Finding 17	The regional competitions appear reasonably accessible given the challenges that are brought by the geographical spread of the State's population.
Finding 18	Current Junior NPL clubs may be disadvantaged in any new structure that would see the perceived status associated with the Junior NPL not available.
Finding 19	There could be financial implications, both positive and negative, involved in removing the status of being a Junior NPL club.
Finding 20	There could be "talent development" implications in removing the status of being an NPL club.
Finding 21	There was a general consensus from the workshops that Football West are performing effectively in their role in and on developing juniors.
Finding 22	Club development in terms of governance and decision-making processes are important for clubs to develop their capacity and to deliver the game for its players. Football West have developed excellent club development resources (available from the Football West website).
Finding 23	Coaching development through education is vital to any junior development program. The quality of the coaching delivered at the club level can suffer due to poor education levels.
Finding 24	There were concerns about access to coaching courses. Courses need to be available and affordable to volunteer coaches at the club level.
Finding 25	There was a concern that parents of participants did not fully understand what "football development" was in a junior context.
Finding 26	Volunteers are consumed by the multitude of tasks associated with implementing a competition structure, that is, just "putting games on".
Finding 27	There was a perception that elite senior NPL clubs and Perth Glory dominated the decision-making process.
Finding 28	The financial implications to current Junior NPL clubs if the Junior NPL is abolished in its current form are not clear.
Finding 29	There is a divide between what the education system (schools) delivers, and what Football West and the community club system delivers.

Findings	
Finding 30	There was a diversity of opinion at the workshops on what supported players and what did not support players in the current Junior NPL competition structure.
Finding 31	Any new competition structure should abolish any restrictive barriers for players.
Finding 32	The competition structure, especially in the top divisions, needs to ensure that participants play enough games for development (Currently this is deemed to be 27 to 30 games a year).
Finding 33	There is support for a system of promotion/relegation to be introduced into all divisions.
Finding 34	There is a need to keep the competition structure simple and easy to understand – Div. 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. Parents need to understand player development is the focus and what the player pathway for their child is.
Finding 35	If criteria are considered necessary for nomination to the top divisions, the criteria need to be minimal, simple, achievable and easy to communicate and understand.
Finding 36	The allocation process for teams to go into the various divisions needs to be clear and understood.
Finding 37	There was considerable support from the workshops for Models 3 or 4 or a mix of these models.
Finding 38	Any competition structure should reflect and have the capacity to adhere to and contribute to the “Football West Development Framework”.
Finding 39	It is imperative that the role of Football West moving forward, and what it provides to clubs is fully understood.
Finding 40	Any competition structure and associated support programs such as coach education, talent identification and the like need to be inclusive and accessible, especially in terms of cost to the participant.
Finding 41	There needs to be a strong cooperative relationship with schools both State and Private, especially those schools offering “specialist” football programs.
Finding 42	Coach development is an essential component of any development system. Appropriate resources need to be invested into key components such as education and training, mentoring and evaluation.

Table 2 comprises Recommendations of the Consultant with respect to potential competition structures and associated matters.

Table 2: Recommendations

	Recommendations
Recommendation 1	Abolish the current Junior NPL competition structure and introduce a simple Divisional Structure within the Junior competition. This means that there would be no distinction between the current Junior NPL and the Community competitions. The new structure should be phased in over the next 2-3 years allowing clubs to adapt accordingly.
Recommendation 2	Introduce an appropriate number of top Divisions and teams per Division based on an estimate of the number of “quality” teams able to be fielded by clubs that will be competitive at this level. (Eg Two top divisions with eight teams) The number of Divisions should be increased over time commensurate with the ability of clubs to field competitive teams.
Recommendation 3	Any competition structure should provide the opportunity for talented players to play the recommended minimum number of games (30) for developmental purposes. This could be a mixture of regular competition matches, Cup games and any post regular competition matches.
Recommendation 4	There should be the opportunity for movement of teams between Divisions at every level from U13-U18. This should be based on one or a number of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal club assessment and nomination to a particular division. ▪ Finishing position in the last season of competition. ▪ The adoption of a “grading system” during the first 5 to 7 games of the season. Movement between Divisions would provide an incentive for clubs to remain in the top Divisions and for aspiring clubs to retain their players and coaches and progress through to the top Divisions.
Recommendation 5	The current Miniros competition meets the needs of players and should be continued substantially in its present form.
Recommendation 6	Football West should consider introducing rules and regulations similar to FQ in terms of game time, “touches”, field size, squad size and number of on ground players per team (for certain age groups) that by design enhances the playing experience.
Recommendation 7	Should it be determined that due to the Western Australian football environment, female participants should be given specific consideration with respect to competition structures and development initiatives, Football West may consider it appropriate to undertake further consultation and engagement in this area.
Recommendation 8	Licensing criteria should be simplified and made achievable by Clubs and should focus on:

Recommendations	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the coaching quality afforded by the Club given the importance of coaching in player development. (eg a “C” class coaching qualification to coach at the top levels). ▪ the need to provide an appropriate standard of facility however it is recognised that Club’s may not have control over their facilities due to local government ownership.
Recommendation 9	Clubs and teams would need to meet the any licensing criteria in order to nominate to the top Divisions and/or each Division prior to the start of each season. Clubs/Teams that meet the licensing criteria would then be assessed based on previous year’s performance and any known player data and if appropriate provided with the opportunity to be included in the Division nominated for.
Recommendation 10	Grading at the beginning of the season should be undertaken in the first 5-7 rounds to determine the appropriateness of teams in particular Divisions and appropriate adjustments made in an attempt to ensure competitive games each week.
Recommendation 11	Consideration should be given to running a “development league” in the “off” (summer) season that features opportunities for players to play at an advanced level and be subject to advance coaching (as in the South Australian model).
Recommendation 12	Football West should develop a strategy to forge good ongoing links between regional clubs/associations and Perth metropolitan clubs to enhance the player pathway.

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1. Introduction

Elite Business Performance (Consultant), was contracted by Football West on 30 March 2023 to undertake one component of the *WA Junior Strategy Development Project (Project)* - designed to establish a strategic framework for the development of all junior football in Western Australia for the next five years.

More specifically, the Consultant's brief was to;

- meet with relevant Football West staff (Project Group);
- prepare for and facilitate a number of stakeholder workshops;
- collate and report on the data obtained from the workshops and a separate survey conducted by Football West.

The Elite Business Performance team that undertook the work comprised:

- Rick Smith (Elite Business Performance Pty Ltd)
- Greg McLennan (McLennan and Associates)

Importantly, the Consultant was **not** engaged to prepare the abovementioned strategic framework, only to complete an important component thereof. In saying this, the Consultant has however undertaken additional work/research and makes recommendations for Football West to consider in the broader context of the development of the said strategic framework.

2. Background Information/Documentation

The following information is provided by way of context for this report:

- The Junior football structure in Western Australia has undergone several changes throughout the previous 30 years and junior participation at a community level has been stable and the effect of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup may see an increase in participation numbers.
- The National Participation Report published by Football Australia (FA) stated that in Western Australia in 2017 there were 16,365 playing MiniRoos and 13,066 playing in youth competitions. In 2019 there were 16291 playing MiniRoos and 12631 playing in youth competitions. In 2021 the report stated that there were 15,666 playing MiniRoos and 12,770 playing in youth competitions. The impact of COVID - 19 can be seen in these numbers.
- The current pathway for advanced junior development is through the National Premier League - Juniors: a League status held by clubs who applied in the years 2014 - 2018. Currently this pathway has been met with some challenges.
- In 2023 Football West, commissioned a review of Junior Football in Western Australia to endeavour to understand the nature of the junior football community and existing pathway programs and competitions, to determine if and where improvements could be made.

The Consultant was sent and/or had access to the following relevant information/documentation:

- The Football West Development Framework (Appendix 1)
- Junior Football in Western Australia Strategy Development - Project Terms of Reference – January 2023 (Appendix 2)
- Football West 2023 Junior Review WA – Review proposal (Appendix 3)
- The current criteria for NPL Juniors. (Appendix 4)
- A paper prepared by Football West staff on the structure and profile of the current junior structure (Appendix 5)
- The National Football curriculum “the roadmap to international success” Han Berger, National Technical Director, Football Federation of Australia.
www.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2017-09/FFA%20National%20Curriculum_1ma6qrmro1pyq10gzxo5rcn7ld.pdf
- FFA Player Pathways – Girls 2019
<https://www.playfootball.com.au/sites/play/files/2019-04/Girls-FFA-Player-Pathways-Document.pdf>
- FFA Player Pathways – Boys 2019
<https://www.playfootball.com.au/sites/play/files/2019-05/Boys-FFA-Player-Pathways-2019.pdf>
- The National Participation Report – FA <https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/national-participation-reports>
- Football Queensland Academy (as detailed on their website and phone calls to clarify certain aspects) <https://footballqueensland.com.au/fq-academy/>
- Football South Australia Junior Competition Structure (as detailed on their website and phone calls to clarify certain aspects) <https://www.footballsouthaustralia.com.au/player-pathways>
- A paper on the key aspects to be considered in player and coach talent identification and development. “Talent Identification and Development” Nick Levett - <https://playerdevelopmentproject.com/the-pathways-of-talent-development/>

3. Scope of Work

Limited Scope

As mentioned in the introduction, the Consultant was engaged to complete one component only of the Project.

The scope of work for which the Consultant was engaged was as follows:

- To meet with relevant Football West staff (Project Group);
- To prepare for and facilitate a number of stakeholder consultation workshops;
- To collate and report on the data obtained from the workshops and a separate survey conducted by Football West.

Objectives

In undertaking the scope of work, the Consultant sought to achieve findings against the following objectives:

Competition Structure & Format

- Analyse the junior competition format and structure for suitability through:

- Understanding its limitations;
- Critique the developmental pathway opportunities created by the competition structure and format;
- Critique regulations in Junior Competitions that support/hinder football development;
- Evaluate changes made in recent years to the Junior Competitions, for improvement.

Junior Development

- Assess the accessibility and inclusivity of existing junior development programs.
- Evaluate the point of success and failure of existing identification pathways (including NPL Juniors), for future improvement.

Deliverables

The Consultant was required to deliver this Report, as one component of the work required to be undertaken on the Project. This report will inform the broader strategic review of junior football in Western Australia.

Limitations

In undertaking the Project the Consultant encountered the following limitations:

- The relatively poor attendance at the workshops:
 - a limitation in that there was a low sample size obtained from the football community, on the specific questions asked at the workshops and in particular with respect to appropriate competition models.
- The broader survey of the football community, which had a much greater response than attendance at the workshops, did not pose questions with respect to potential competition models.

4. Methodology

The following investigation methodology was used.

4.1 Document Review

The documents listed at Section 2 were reviewed.

4.2 Workshop and Briefing with Football West Staff

An initial workshop was conducted with the staff of Football West to fully explore the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and what currently supported juniors and what currently did not support juniors in the existing competition structure and associated support systems.

From this workshop four possible competition structure models emerged. These models are detailed in the findings.

4.3 Consultation Forums

Seven consultation forums were conducted. Six of these were spread throughout the Perth metropolitan area with the seventh being an online forum for regional participants. The first scheduled forum in Ellenbrook (which would have meant eight forums in total) had no participants attend despite a number registering.

- Each workshop participant was sent a pre workshop questionnaire to assist in their preparation for the workshop. (Appendix 6).
- Participants at each workshop worked through a series of questions pertaining to the purpose of the Review.
- Pertinent comments on the issues involved were recorded by the Consultants.

The specific consultation forums conducted and number of participants in attendance were as follows:

- Consultation Workshop; North 1 (Parents/Public) – 20 May, Ellenbrook United Football Club, Ellenbrook Sports Hub, 107 Verbana Drive Aveley. Number of participants - 0
- Consultation Workshop; North 2 (Club Personnel) – 24 May Floreat Athena Football Club. Number of participants - 4
- Consultation Workshop; South 1 (Club Personnel) -31 May Armadale Soccer Club, 748 Armadale Road, Forrestdale. Number of participants - 8
- Consultation Workshop; Central 1 (Parents/Public) – 7 June – Subiaco AFC. Number of participants - 5
- Consultation Workshop; Central 2 (Club Personnel) – 28 June - Balcatta Etna Football Club, Grindleford Drive, Balcatta. Number of participants - 14
- Consultation Workshop; South 2 (Parents/Public) – 19 July Armadale Soccer Club, 748 Armadale Road, Forrestdale. Number of participants - 13
- Consultation Workshop; Regional (Parents/Public/Club Personnel) – online 25 July. Number of participants - 3
- Consultation Workshop; Junior Standing Committee – Football West 2 August. Number of participants - 16

4.4 Desktop Research

Intensive desktop research was undertaken with respect to football development programs and competition structures, including identifying Football Australia programs and pathways and best practice adaptations, review of the the Sport Australia FTEM Model discussions with other Member Federations regarding Junior Structures and.

4.5 Survey

Football West staff created and distributed a survey to Junior Players Parents, Club Administrators/Management, Regional Associations and Coaches.

5. Findings

5.1 Background Information

5.1.1 Football Australia Player Pathways

Football Australia's Player Pathways provide a comprehensive approach to what is required to give a player the opportunity to reach their potential playing the game.

There are four platforms upon which the pathway is built. These platforms should be reflected in what is delivered in Western Australia. These platforms are:

- The Foundation - made up of:
 - The National Football Curriculum
 - The SAP GIG Methodology
 - Coach Education
 - The Talent Identification Course
- The Playing Environment – made up of:
 - The SAP League - (U5 to U12)
 - Community Football - U13 to Senior
 - NPL Youth - U13 to U17
 - Youth to Seniors
 - NPL – Seniors
- Support Programs – made up of:
 - Skill Acquisition – U9 to U16
 - Talent Support Programs – U13 to U16
 - High Performance Football Schools (Year 9 to 12)
- The National Teams - made up of:
 - Joeys – U/17
 - Junior Matildas – U17
 - Young Socceroos – U20
 - Young Matildas – U20
 - Olyroos – U23
 - Socceroos – Senior
 - Matildas – Senior

Each of these platform's dovetail into one another. A player should be involved in these sorts of initiatives to reach their potential.

FA and Football West practice is to treat male and female participants as one group in terms of competition structure and junior development initiatives.

The participants in the workshops did not in most cases discuss the male and female competition structures and development opportunities as separate components of the football framework.

A specific recommendation with respect to potential consultation targeted at the female participants is provided in the Recommendations section of this report.

5.1.2 Football West 2023 Junior Competition Structures

The 2023 Football West Junior Competition structures are as follows:

Junior Boys (Girls) League

A mixed competition. Where junior boys and girls are able to join any team under this Competition League.

- The Junior Boys (Girls) League contains the following competitions:
 - Under 13s
 - Under 14s
 - Under 15s
 - Under 16s
 - Under 18s
- Each of the age groups, has divisions within it. E.g. Under 13s League will be split into:
 - Under 13s Division 1
 - Under 13s Division 2
 - Under 13s North Division 1
 - Under 13s South Division 1

The number of Divisions, is solely dependent upon the number of teams within that league. Football West aim to have no more than 10 teams per Division. On average each League varies from 4–7 Divisions.

Eighteen matches are played per calendar year.

Junior Girls League

This is a female only competition.

- The Junior Girls League contains the following competitions:
 - Under 13s (introduced this year)
 - Under 14s
 - Under 16s
 - Under 17s (introduced this year)

As in the Junior Boys competition, the Junior Girls League, are split into Divisions. The number of teams in the Junior Girls League are very few when compared to the Junior Boys League, and Football West has seen data trends of struggling participation numbers over the past five years in this competition. However, the numbers continue to project upwards slowly.

On average each League varies from 1–3 Divisions.

18 Matches are played per calendar year.

5.1.3 Regional Area Competition Structures

The structure of regional competitions is not complex and easy to understand. Regional competitions struggle to provide elite and even sub elite pathways for football.

- South West – Bunbury
 - The competition with ladders goes from – U12, U13, U15 & U17 Boys and then for the girls it is U12, U14 & U17 Girls.
 - The competition had U11's but have decided this year to encourage the development of players and our parents/coaches and players were taking it very seriously so we opted to remove with the view to remove U12 next year from the competition.
 - There is a separate girls competition although we do still have girls playing in the boys competition if they want to.

- There are no divisions this year but in previous years where there were more than 12 teams in an age group we split into two divisions Blue & Red to separate the better teams from the weaker teams.
- There is no promotion or relegation in our competition.
- Great Southern – Albany
 - Juniors play mixed boys and girls all way through from U7s to U18s.
 - Each age group plays in one single division respectively.
 - U7s - U12s play for school based clubs and join independent clubs from U13s - U18s.
 - Currently the U16, U17 and U18 competitions are combined due to lack of teams (mainly this lack exists in the U17 and U18 age groups).
 - Due to there being only one division in each age group, there is no promotion or relegation structure.
- Goldfields – Kalgoorlie
 - Age groups in the Goldfields Soccer Association are as follows:
 - Under 6
 - Under 7
 - Under 8
 - Under 9
 - Under 10
 - Under 11
 - Under 12
 - Under 14
 - Under 16
 - There is no promotion or relegation within this league. There are only four teams in each age group from 12 and above.

5.1.4 Queensland and South Australia Models

The two states that were analysed (website analysis and through direct contact) were Queensland – Football Queensland (FQ) and South Australia – Football South Australia (FSA).

These states were selected as they are of similar nature to Western Australia geographically and demographically. Western Australia is fundamentally a “one city” state – Perth, with small coastal populations outside of Perth’s metropolitan area. South Australia is very similar, and Queensland has the same demographic “spread”.

Queensland

- There is no Junior NPL competition.
- There is an FQ Academy.
- Senior and Junior licences are separate processes and the former NPL junior and SAP leagues have been replaced with a simple and more consistent naming convention of the ‘FQ Academy Leagues’, for ages U9 to U18 being the simple designation for boys and girls, playing across up to four divisions in participating clubs.
- The U13 age cohort play a 9 v 9 format in all competitions across the state.
- The 9 v 9 format is in place across all competitions (mixed/girls and community/advanced) which allows clubs and teams to ensure their recruitment and retention strategies reflect the advantages of this. The Under 13 fixtures are played on smaller fields with 35-minute halves.
- Squad sizes for all junior teams are capped at 13.

- The format is designed to deliver benefits for young players through more touches on the ball and increased match minutes per player.

The **FQ Club Assessment** process evaluates the technical environment of each club's junior programs against best practice with assessments undertaken across the entire U9 to U18 age groups. This assessment continues to form the basis for league composition, design and access.

South Australia

There is currently a comprehensive review being undertaken.

- FSA clubs are registered to FSA and FA and compete in a local competition.
- There is no license or playing ties with senior clubs.
- Clubs provide training and a games program within a positive youth development environment.
- The competitions are called **Junior Premier League (JPL)** and **Junior State League (JSL)** both with competitions from U12 through to U17. U18s is part of the senior competition. MiniRoos and age groups up to U12 are considered separate community competitions.
- The JPL is seen as the better quality competition and the JSL is seen as the "community" competition.
- There are no "licensing" arrangements for clubs in place.
- Competitions are organised in the summer off season and our regular longer season runs between March and September.
 - Regular Season (March – September):
 - Youth Boys: U12-U17 Junior Premier League (JPL) Junior State League (JSL) U12-U17
 - Youth Girls: U13, U15, U17
 - Summer Development League (October to December):
 - Boys: U10, U12 and U14 TBC
 - Girls: U11, U13, U15 TBC
 - Juniors Club participation:
 - Differentiated Miniroos competitions split geographically U6 – U11 (U10 and U11 FSA conduct grading)
- There is promotion/relegation within the competitions from U13 through to U17.
- There is no official grading.
- Clubs nominate teams to divisions and this coupled with where the teams finished in the preceding year determines where they start the season.
- After two months of competition clubs and/or FSA can reallocate teams to divisions to suit their level of play.

5.2 General Comments

5.2.1 Future competition structure models

Four potential future competition structure models were identified, developed and presented at all workshops. The potential competition models were as follows:

- **Model 1** - No change
- **Model 2** – Adopt a new Junior NPL structure:

- Keep the current NPL but reduce it to 12 Clubs (use same criteria/ranking system as currently used)
 - The teams that would be dropped out of the current Junior NPL would then play in the Community Junior Competition
 - The Community Junior Competition would then fall under the Junior NPL and would begin as Div. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc
- **Model 3** – Abolish the current Junior NPL competition structure and introduce:
 - Two top Divisions each with 10-12 teams
 - The Current Community Junior Competition would then be Div. 3, Div. 4, Div. 5 etc
 - **Model 4** – Abolish the current Junior NPL competition structure and introduce:
 - Three top Divisions each with 10 teams
 - The Current Community Junior Competition would then be Div. 4, Div. 5, Div. 6 etc
 - If three rounds were played, each team would play 27 games (30+ games was advised by Football West staff to the Consultants as being the recommended number for development purposes).

5.2.2 Allocation of Clubs/Teams to Competition/Divisions

There was considerable discussion at each of the workshops with respect to how clubs/teams would be allocated to competitions/divisions and whether any and if so what licensing criteria should be used as a prerequisite for allocation. Options discussed were as follows:

- **Option 1 - No licensing criteria**
 - Year 1 – Keep current structure with existing clubs
 - Year 2 – Allocation to Division based on:
 - Year 1 finishing position, or
 - Grading at beginning of season, or
 - A combination of year 1 finishing position and grading at the beginning of the season
 - Year 3 – Options
 - Year 2 finishing position, or
 - Grading at beginning of season, or
 - A combination of Year 2 finishing position and grading at the beginning of the season, or
 - Promotion/Relegation - two up, two down – no grading
- **Option 2 - Establish licensing criteria.**
 - Clubs and teams would need to meet certain mandatory licensing criteria in order to nominate to particular competition/divisions.
 - (There may also (in addition to the mandatory criteria) be best practice criteria that clubs would be encouraged to work toward.
 - This licensing system would take into account the FA club licensing system as well as WA needs.
 - Clubs/Teams that met the mandatory criteria for a particular competition/division, would then be able to nominate for that particular competition/division.
 - Football West would then determine based on previous year(s) performance and player information, the competition/division into which the club/team is placed.

- Grading at the beginning of the season would then be used to determine the suitability of allocation.

5.3 General Findings and Comments

Finding 1

The fundamental issue identified through the workshops was with the current overall junior competition structure not within the broader junior development initiatives.

Comment on Finding 1

The great majority of feedback and much of the discussion at the workshops centred on the junior competition structure. (See Appendix 7 - Workshop Notes - for comprehensive notes from each of the workshops).

- The great majority of feedback received centred on the structure and the need for change within the structure, not what needs to be changed in the development of the game.
- The Junior NPL competition structure was thought by many to create an “artificial” barrier for players to progress within their club structure. This restricts a player from moving through the various stages of any player pathway and fully articulating with the FA Player Pathways for both boys and girls which is not best practice.
- The FA Player Pathways recognise that many factors can influence a player’s journey including social, emotional, psychological, physiological and technical/tactical aspects. Issues that impact these factors need to be minimalised.
- Sport Australia have developed a “generic” player pathway whose stages include - Foundations, Talent, Elite and Master (FTEM) that allows a player to “seamlessly” transition through the stages based on their ability. This is critical in any talent development initiative.

Finding 2

Talent Identification processes, in the initial stages, is an essential role for clubs and when implemented, coaches and players can progress with Football West services and support.

Comment on the Finding 2

There was a general consensus on this from the workshops. Clubs are essential in providing access to the FA Player Pathways with the assistance of Football West. Currently this appears to be working reasonably well.

Survey – 90% of respondents believed Clubs should be recognised for providing a strong youth development environment.

Finding 3

Survey - 75% of respondents to the survey were involved at a community participation level.

Comment on Finding 3

The survey results need to be viewed through the lens that 75% of respondents were at the community participation level as opposed to the Junior NPL level.

5.4 Specific Findings and Comments

Specific findings, comments on the findings and cross references to the survey results are made in this section against the objectives sought to be achieved from this Review.

5.4.1 Competition Structure and Format

Understanding Competition and Structure limitations

Finding 4

The NPL has not fully delivered on its planned objectives.

Comment on the Finding 4

The NPL was introduced in an attempt to ensure that talented players could progress and play against other talented players.

The restrictions created from how the NPL was structured have been detrimental to this. Football West hold NPL Junior Clubs to certain criteria that if not met, they risk receiving strict penalties. The current requirements for all NPL Junior Clubs are:

- Have a minimum of 16 players in each NPL Junior Team (from Under 13s – Under 16s)
- Each team requires a coach with at least a C Diploma.
- Each club requires an accredited Technical Director
- Submit a player roster for each Team to Football West, outlining details of the coaching staff and players
- Submit a Youth Development Program

Football West review the player roster, coaching staff and youth development program. Under the Junior NPL Compliance Regulations 2022 and Section.01 of the Youth Development Program (YDP), NPL Junior Clubs had to provide the following minimum details in a club plan to be a Junior NPL club:

- Adhere to the YDP mission, vision and goals;
- A statement on the clubs;
 - youth playing philosophy and youth development philosophy;
 - organisation of their youth sector (organisational chart, specific age groups, etc.)
 - infrastructure available for youth sector (training and match facilities, etc.)
 - football education program for the different age groups (Psychological, Technical, Tactical and Physical)
 - yearly training plans (min. duration of 40 weeks for ages 14 and above; max. of 34 weeks for ages 10-13) with cycles and session objectives
 - evaluation and review processes for individual players.

There are a number of current NPL clubs that do not comply with the above requirements. Clubs struggle with fielding teams and with having suitably accredited coaches.

Survey – 29% of coaches had no qualifications (which is understandable because many of them are well meaning and committed parents). Twenty-eight percent hold “C” class licences.

Finding 5

The NPL has created an “artificial elite” status with criteria, that a number of the Junior NPL clubs cannot and do not deliver on.

Comment on Finding 5

It appears that this artificial elite status is driven by people's passions and ambitions for their children.

This provides challenges for clubs in areas such as the delivery of perceived "quality" programs, the cost of the delivery of these programs and the availability of appropriate staff to run the programs.

It is noted that both Football Queensland (FQ) and Football South Australia (FSA) have both opted to drop the reference to the NPL in their junior competition structure.

Finding 6

There is a wide variety of quality of play within the Junior NPL competition which has led to some uncompetitive games.

Comment on Finding 6

The Junior Competition needs to be a like vs like competition – this promotes an individual's football journey and must be fostered by the competition structure.

A variety of factors including (but not limited to) the definition of a talented player, adherence to the Junior NPL criteria for clubs, coaching quality, cost to the player of the Junior NPL and the capacity of some of the Junior NPL clubs to deliver within the Junior NPL competition influence competition results. This has resulted in "talented" players not playing against other talented players all the time.

Survey – 70% of respondents have indicated that the matches they observe/participate in are competitive.

The workshops indicated that the Junior NPL competition in some instances resulted in uncompetitive games.

Finding 7

There is no promotion and relegation system in place for clubs to move out of the Junior NPL competition and more importantly into the Junior NPL competition.

Comment on Finding 7

The general consensus from the workshops was that a system of promotion and relegation be developed and adopted within a divisional structure.

This lack of promotion and relegation provided little motivation for clubs both within the Junior NPL and those community clubs that develop the capacity to be a Junior NPL club to strive for excellence on and off the field.

Many players with aspirations of playing in the Junior NPL are forced to change clubs (club hop) to be given the opportunity.

The current Junior NPL competition structure established a "locked shop" system.

It is noted that:

- FQ have a club assessment scheme that evaluates the technical environment of each club's junior programs against best practice with assessments undertaken across the entire U9 to U18 age groups. Where a club finishes in its last year of competition plays a very small role in where it plays the following year.

- FSA have promotion/relegation within the competitions from U13 through to U17. There is no official grading as such. Clubs nominate teams to divisions, and this coupled with where the teams finished in the preceding year determines where they start the season. After two months of competition clubs and/or FSA can reallocate teams to divisions to suit their level of play.

Survey – 85% of respondents indicated that junior teams should be moved in and out of divisions, based primarily on their ability and 89% believed a stable player base is conducive to youth development.

Finding 8

There was minimal comment on and therefore concern about the MiniRoos competition. There were positive comments in general with respect to the structure and development opportunities presented by the MiniRoos competition.

Comment on Finding 8

The comments that were made were positive and it appears that the competition overall, meets the developmental needs of players.

The developmental pathway opportunities created by the Competition Structure and Format

Finding 9

Player pathways which include the Junior NPL competition structure, can be complex and restrictive and often mean that to advance through the pathway, players must be prepared to change clubs.

Comment on Finding 9

The current Junior NPL competition structure could be detrimental to the player pathway given one of the prime motivations to play the game is “playing with your mates” (Survey results).

The FA Player Pathways are clear and comprehensive. There were some differences of opinion expressed at the workshops in how the FA Player Pathways should be implemented.

FQ and FSA both have clearly delineated pathways that do not appear to be restrictive to a player.

Survey – 31.8% responded that they play/engage with junior football because it is social and fun or because their friends are involved in football. Approximately 7.5% responded that they wanted to be a professional player in the future.

Finding 10

There was concern that the player pathway was fragmented and unclear.

Comment on Finding 10

The pathway attempts to encompass all aspects of player development. This provides some complex issues for volunteers at club level and needs to be simplified if possible.

Survey – 81% stated that the pathway was not clear (strongly disagree, disagree and neutral). 20% believed the pathway was clear overall and 32% believed it was clear at the club level.

The regulations in Junior Competitions that support/hinder football development.

Finding 11

The Junior NPL geographical “spread” of games within divisions can cause angst amongst parents – a lot of travel is involved.

Comment on Finding 11

The geographical spread adds to the cost in both time and money for families whose children participate.

Survey – 36% of respondents travelled more than 21km to games. This could be exacerbated if a family has more than one child participating in different divisions/competitions.

Finding 12

The current Junior NPL gives a club the impetus to plan “whole of club” development.

Comment on Finding 12

Although not a significant amount of feedback noted the whole of club development aspect, there was some constructive comment on how the Junior NPL status provided the motivation for clubs to develop a “whole of club” approach to planning and subsequent delivery of programs.

Survey – 73% of respondents stated - I/my child would be more likely to play for a club if they were recognised for providing a strong youth development environment.

Whilst this is a worthwhile motivational component, it relies upon clubs actually undertaking the appropriate measures to implement the necessary structures and meet Junior NPL criteria, and for FW to “enforce” the criteria.

Finding 13

Allowing players to play “up” or “down” out of their age group appears to allow for appropriate player development.

Comment on Finding 13

Playing up or down an age group is a practice that is generally accepted and doesn’t appear to disadvantage players.

Survey – 75% of respondents played one year above their age group. Approximately 18% played two years above their age group.

The effectiveness of the changes made in recent years to the Junior Competitions

Finding 14

The move to the Junior NPL competition structure has not been as successful as anticipated.

Comment on Finding 14

There was a diversity of opinion on the strengths and weaknesses in the current structure. Full written responses can be found at Appendix 7. The following is a summary of the most common workshop responses:

Strengths

- Competition caters for large numbers of participants. Anyone can play
- Miniroos delivers a good quality product effectively

- The lower age groups are (U6s to U12s) are working well
- The majority of coaches are committed and want the best for the player and themselves. The Junior NPL has improved quality of coaching standards
- Most Clubs have committed club administrators
- The different levels of competition, competitive (Junior NPL) and community cover all aspects of the game
- The Junior NPL attracts the best players
- There is grading to try and balance the competition
- Increase in female participation
- There is a structured environment for development

Weaknesses

- The quality of the Junior NPL is diluted because of numbers of teams. Too many clubs in the Junior NPL
- There is a lack of competitive games over the season
- The season should be longer
- The cost to a player in many Junior NPL clubs to very high and therefore restrictive
- The structure is not based on performance based “merit”
- There is no promotion and relegation system in place
- There is a concern that Perth Glory attracts a concentration of elite players at one club
- There is a lack of a developmental structure (eg mentoring) in coaching
- There is a lack of quality referees
- Coaches:
 - There are not enough coaches at the right levels
 - The cost of coaching accreditation is too high. Clubs are struggling to afford funding attendees
- Some clubs do not have the capacity to meet the required Junior NPL criteria or be competitive throughout the grades.
- The Junior NPL is causing “team hopping” by individuals seeking to play in the Junior NPL. The structure can mean whole teams leaving clubs.
- Grading is not entirely accurate due to player movement.

The accessibility and inclusivity of existing junior development programs

Finding 15

There appears to be a very good understanding and subsequent practice within clubs on how to ensure that they are inclusive especially with respect to issues such as discrimination.

Comment on Finding 15

It was noted that the cost for a player to participate in the Junior NPL can be high and therefore restrictive resulting in a “socio economic” barrier to many and an element of exclusivity.

The cost to participate at the elite Junior level may result in very talented junior footballers being unjustly prohibited from progressing through the football pathway commensurate with their ability.

Survey – 7.5% of respondents indicated that the reason they play at their current club is because the fee structure is more affordable than other clubs. The workshops indicated that the fees charged by some Junior NPL clubs may be a barrier to participation.

Finding 16

All major regional centres have competition structures that meet local demand.

Comment on Finding 16

The regional associations provide a competition structure that is based on what is required at the local level and therefore suits local demands.

Regional competition structures are simple and easy to understand.

In the future, some thought should be given on how regional clubs and associations can develop cooperative and beneficial partnerships with Perth metropolitan clubs, so talented players from the regions can progress into the metropolitan competition at the appropriate level. It is understood that this occurs informally now.

FQ have a well-developed regional structure both in terms of competition and junior development.

Finding 17

The regional competitions appear reasonably accessible given the challenges that are brought by the geographical spread of the State's population.

Comment on Finding 17

There are significant challenges to State Sporting Associations (SSAs) in providing support to their clubs in regional WA to develop their sports.

Football West, to its credit, have established Regional Development Officers in each major regional centre that work with the local clubs and associations to develop the game. These appear to be effective and deliver value for money.

Survey – 85% of respondents were part of the competition in the Perth metropolitan area.

The point of success and failure of existing identification pathways (including Junior NPL), for future improvement

Finding 18

Current Junior NPL clubs may be disadvantaged in any new structure that would see the perceived status associated with the Junior NPL not available.

Comment on Finding 18

The retention of players, coaches and support staff by a club that is facing relegation in any new structure was of concern.

The Junior NPL status was considered attractive to a cohort of parents that want their children to progress through the talent development pathway, especially if the child had been identified through a talent identification program/process.

Football West would need to ensure that development programs will be accessible to all clubs and players regardless of club status.

Finding 19

There could be financial implications, both positive and negative, involved in removing the status of being a Junior NPL club.

Comment on Finding 19

Currently some Junior NPL clubs were thought to take advantage of their Junior NPL status to charge what is seen as high club fees to fund their operations.

Junior NPL clubs are required to provide services and programs to their players that require an investment level over and above a “community” club.

The negative impact of having no Junior NPL status could mean less revenues being collected from players. This could impact on club investment strategies and lead to a decline in investment in areas such as development and facilities.

The positive impact could mean reducing the “socio-economic” barrier created by high club fees meaning less costs to the player.

Finding 20

There could be “talent development” implications in removing the status of being an NPL club.

Comment on Finding 20

For clubs to have Junior NPL status they must commit to implementing the required talent development initiatives. Without Junior NPL status, the motivation and commitment to implementing talent and development initiatives may waiver. (A comment from one of the workshops).

FQ and FSA both have significant developmental criteria and “rules of competition” that are based on developmental “best practice”.

Finding 21

There was a general consensus from the workshops that Football West are performing effectively in their role in and on developing juniors.

Comment on Finding 21

Football West’s current junior development initiatives were not a significant issue in the feedback from the workshops.

Football West’s operations (club development, junior development) were thought to be generally meeting the expectations of the clubs although clubs would like more support in certain areas (eg Governance).

Survey – 65% were neutral or agreed that there was adequate information on youth development principles and training available for coaches.

Contrary to the workshop findings, only 20% of survey respondents stated that Football West had clearly defined pathways into programs for junior players (i.e. into Clubs, SAP, TSP, Country Week, Country Camp, State Teams, National Teams).

Finding 22

Club development in terms of governance and decision-making processes are important for clubs to develop their capacity and to deliver the game for its players. Football West have developed excellent club development resources (available from the Football West website).

Comment on Finding 22

Comments were made surrounding the capacity of clubs to deliver what was required of them at the Junior NPL and community level.

To deliver appropriate services to a community is becoming more complex and costly.

Developing a club's financial capacity to fund its facility development, support services, human resource development (such as coaching) was highlighted as an ongoing need.

Football West's resources in the area of club development are highly developed and appropriate.

FQ have a comprehensive "Club Assessment" process. To do well in their evaluation, clubs need to be well governed and well planned.

Survey - The survey did not specifically address the issue of club governance and administration. It is noted that 13% of survey respondents were club administrators.

Finding 23

Coaching development through education is vital to any junior development program. The quality of the coaching delivered at the club level can suffer due to poor education levels.

Comment on Finding 23

There is a fear of "over" coaching which may hold the creativity of players back.

FA coaching resources place a priority on players enjoyment and social environment especially in the ages 9 to 12 years. Training at this age should be FUN and focus on the four core skills in both attack and defence. The four core skills are:

- First Touch
- Striking the ball
- Running with the ball
- 1 vs 1

Coaches need to be aware of the FA Player Pathway guidelines and be educated, through the National curriculum in and on best practice and how to apply it.

Survey - 95% of respondents agreed that good quality, well educated coaches are essential, and 46% agreed that the current quality meets their expectations.

Approximately 17% of survey respondents were coaches. The great majority of coaches had more than four years' experience. Seventy-six percent of respondents were happy with the gametime they received and 74% were happy with the "touches" they received.

Finding 24

There were concerns about access to coaching courses. Courses need to be available and affordable to volunteer coaches at the club level.

Comment on Finding 24

The cost of coaching courses is high and access to courses can therefore be restrictive.

Costs need to be affordable for club personnel. The timing of the courses needs to be appropriate and the issues surrounding access to the courses need to be rethought. These aspects can cause issues for club personnel and parents.

Survey - 29% of current coaches do not hold a football qualification.

Finding 25

There was a concern that parents of participants did not fully understand what “football development” was in a junior context.

Comment on Finding 25

Parents, especially those whose children have been identified as having talent, need to be educated and made aware of what the research and stated development plans of the FA and Football West are.

Players develop at different rates, that is, not all at the same time, therefore, staged progressive player development is vital.

Clubs do and should play a critical role in educating parents.

Survey – 61% of survey respondents were parents. A potential consequence of this is that the responding parents may not have been aware of, or fully understood, the current developmental frameworks and initiatives.

Finding 26

Volunteers are consumed by the multitude of tasks associated with implementing a competition structure, that is, just “putting games on”.

Comment on Finding 26

Talent development programs and processes as well as supporting programs and initiatives take time and energy.

Parents, who are usually the volunteers that run clubs, have not the time for club development and therefore developing club capacity becomes an issue.

Club planning is a key tool, but the planning process must be easy for clubs to understand and implement and attainable.

Finding 27

There was a perception that elite senior NPL clubs and Perth Glory dominated the decision-making process.

Comment on Finding 27

This was a widely held opinion at the workshops.

Transparency of decision making by Football West will be key in addressing this perception.

Finding 28

The financial implications to current Junior NPL clubs if the Junior NPL is abolished in its current form are not clear.

Comment on Finding 28

It is recommended that a financial analysis be undertaken on the impact of removing the Junior NPL status of the competition to further inform the decision-making process.

Finding 29

There is a divide between what the education system (schools) delivers, and what Football West and the community club system delivers.

Comment on Finding 29

The relationship between the various school programs/competition structures needs to be redefined and made more workable if possible.

Survey – 29% of respondents took part in school based programs or academy programs and 32% took part in private academy programs.

Finding 30

There was a diversity of opinion at the workshops on what supported players and what did not support players in the current NPL Junior competition structure. Full written responses can be found at Appendix 7).

The following is a summary of the workshop responses with respect to what supports and does not support players:

What supports players?

- Club committees, their identity and their services and programs
- The administration (organisation and facilitation of the league) by all clubs and Football West
- The facility infrastructure provided by the clubs
- Qualified coaches who know and understand what is required both in training and competition
- The TSP, SAP, State teams and academies provide pathways
- The competition structure. It is inclusive. The game formats provide opportunity
- Financial backing – coaching courses, coaches and infrastructure
- Participants playing with friends, having no pressure and having an adventure
- The development pathways available from Miniroos to junior competition to youth to senior football

What does not support players?

- The costs to participate including costs of additional programs, club coaching, Football West and developing club infrastructure
- The differences in what clubs provide in terms of facilities – lack of quality pitches, lighting and changerooms
- The current system doesn't support state teams or Perth Glory
- The A League competition and players
- The PSA / School programs
- The cost and access of/to coach education.
- There is an inconsistency in the quality of coaching

- The role of FA and Football West is to support coaches. FA should invest more in education
- The dimensions of the playing facilities in terms of field size and goal size up to the U13's
- The girls and women's competition needs rethinking
- There is a perceived lack of coordination between different levels of football
- The Talent Identification process
- There is a shortage of volunteers at every level. It is difficult to get well trained people to be involved. Volunteer workloads are too high in some areas
- The number of games played per season (too few)

Comment on Finding 30

Well run Club's provide an essential access point to players being able to participate.

Access to good quality Club facilities is essential. Some Club's appeared to struggle to obtain the necessary level of access to facilities in order to provide comprehensive development programs (eg a summer competition).

Local Government as owners of most facilities play a significant role in determining the nature and type of facilities provided to clubs.

The investment levels in coach education need to meet demand and be affordable.

Clubs are run by volunteers and are in many instances therefore limited in their capacity to deliver programs and services.

Junior development programs from FA and Football West are inclusive of male and female participants and provide similar pathways and curricula.

Survey - 51% of survey respondents believed that Club facilities were appropriate to their needs.

A possible future junior competition structure

When considering a future competition structure, it is important to look across the sport industry for "best practice". Sport Australia promote a model entitled the Foundations, Talent, Elite, Mastery (FTEM) pathway model.

The junior football competition structure and associated development strategies should fit into one, two and three of the FTEM Foundation stages and from there stages one and two of the Talent component. Transition through the stages should be "seamless" for a player.

Football West should look to implement a competition structure that provides a more seamless transition than the existing Junior NPL competition structure.

The advantages and disadvantages of the four models investigated

Findings from the Workshops

- **Model 1** - No change. This model has been analysed above.
- **Model 2** – Adopt a new Junior NPL structure:

- Keep the current NPL but reduce it to 12 clubs (use same criteria/ranking system as currently used)
- The teams that would be dropped out of the current Junior NPL would then play in the Community Junior Competition
- The Community Junior Competition would then fall under the Junior NPL and would begin as Div. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc

Pros

- It retains the NPL status
- Makes it easier for volunteers as they understand the system
- It creates an elite juniors by providing a higher level of competition, better competition
- Retains the quality of competition. It gathers talent together
- No grading after initial allocation of 12 clubs with potential promotion relegation
- Status/criteria with centers of excellence
- It concentrates elite players and coaches at the top
- It will encourage the top 12 teams to foster junior pathways

Cons

- The NPL is an artificial construct that provides a barrier to non NPL teams. It will still be a “closed shop”
 - It will be exclusive not inclusive
 - The top 12 clubs will poach quality players
 - It could create a lack of variety of opponents
 - Clubs can only have 1 team per competition
 - The existing NPL clubs that would drop out of the NPL would need to “restructure” because of their perceived loss of status
 - 16 teams in top division is better
 - Potential geographical issues – the top divisions could all be in the North metro
 - Could lead to a lack of development in non NPL clubs
 - Promotion and relegations system could be an issue
- **Model 3** – Abolish the current Junior NPL competition structure and introduce:
 - Two top Divisions each with 10-12 teams
 - The Current Community Junior Competition would then be Div. 3, Div. 4, Div. 5 etc

Pros

- This model is clear and easily understood. It provides an even playing field for all clubs, is inclusive, provides clear player pathways and provides a fair and open process
- Division 1 is established as the top or elite team competition. The best teams against one another – provided there is promotion/relegation. The accessibility to high quality football is improved and coaches may stay at a club if there is a chance to compete at the highest level
- It provides club autonomy and rewards clubs for doing well
- It provides downward pressure on fees (no longer a license to sell NPL status – it is now a product that can be sold)
- Increases chances of kids being able to play at the elite level at a reasonable cost

- Start to reduce player portability – stop players being shopped around
- It removes the stigma associated with the Junior NPL name
- Keep participation in 13-18 age
- Grading preseason 13-17
- 18's should be seniors

Cons

- There will be a political challenge in removing the NPL status of clubs. Many clubs don't have the prestige of NPL status
 - It could mean the pathway to senior NPL is altered
 - Deciding the number of teams in each division and how they are selected will be an issue
 - The quality of play could still be diluted – still 20 teams
 - Will Division 1 and Division 2 become the new NPL? It will require a promotion and relegation system to prevent this
 - The financial impact (possible loss of revenue to the existing 22 NPL clubs in the short term) will have on some of the existing Junior NPL clubs needs to be understood. Will it mean less revenue for Football West?
- **Model 4** – Abolish the current Junior NPL competition structure and introduce:
 - Three top Divisions each with 10 teams
 - The Current Community Junior Competition would then be Div. 4, Div. 5, Div. 6 etc
 - If three rounds were played, each team would play 27 games (30+ games is recommended for development purposes)

Pros

- It will reward clubs that focus on player development which will aid player retention at the club level
- The increase in the number of games, therefore game time, will aid player development
- Clubs have the responsibility to:
 - Nominate to divisions
 - Clubs have control of their destiny
- It still requires a grading system and promotion and relegation
- Opportunity for each team to play in a more competitive division based on ability
- Club licensing is a good idea – brings quality

Cons

- There could be an issue involving access to facilities – mid-week or central venue games may need to be held
- Puts pressure on volunteers through extending to a 30 week season
- Unlikely to have 30 teams that would commit to a 30 game structure
- There is not enough depth of players to keep the quality required
- Works against clubs that already have a junior NPL program and a sustainable development pathway
- Clubs would struggle to meet NPL criteria if only had one or two teams at the higher level

Finding 31

Any new competition structure should abolish any restrictive barriers for players.

Comment on Finding 31

All player pathways espoused as “best practice” do not have artificial barriers for players within their structure.

Such barriers could be seen as exclusive practice.

FQ and FSA have redesigned their competition formats and developmental initiatives in an effort to ensure players have a seamless transition between developmental stages.

Finding 32

The competition structure, especially in the top divisions, needs to ensure that participants play enough games for development (Currently this is deemed to be 27 to 30 games a year).

Comment on Finding 32

Based on best practice for player development.

This could be achieved by either extending the main playing season for the two or three top divisions or establishing another talent development competition in the off season. (For example, FSA have initiated such a “summer” competition.

The competition structure implemented by FQ in 2023 comprises 30/31 weeks of competition.

Survey – 90% of respondents agreed that playing competitive games is essential for player development. Seventy-three percent were satisfied with the number of games played throughout the season.

Finding 33

There is support for a system of promotion/relegation to be introduced into all divisions.

Comment on Finding 33

It is important to recognise the need for progression through a structure that sees the most skilled players play in a division that contains like players.

The introduction of a promotion/relegation system along with a grading system will facilitate this.

There are potential negative impacts with a promotion/relegation system. These need to be analysed and understood by all.

FQ and FSA have both developed strategies that see teams/clubs move in and out of divisions based on performance and other criteria.

Survey – 89% of respondents believed junior teams should be moved in and out of divisions, based primarily on their ability.

Finding 34

There is a need to keep the competition structure simple and easy to understand – Div. 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. Parents need to understand player development is the focus and what the player pathway for their child is.

Comment on Finding 34

Parents need to understand how their children will progress, what steps are involved in the player pathway and importantly what they need to contribute to their child's journey on that pathway. The club will play an important role in this.

Survey – 61% of respondents were parents and 78% believed youth development should be performance focused, not results focused. 89% believed a stable player base was conducive to youth development.

Finding 35

If criteria are considered necessary for nomination to the top divisions, the criteria need to be minimal, simple, achievable and easy to communicate and understand.

Comment on Finding 35

The criteria must be realistic and attainable by the clubs involved.

Clubs must meet the criteria.

FQ have a club assessment scheme that evaluates the technical environment of each club's junior programs against best practice with assessments undertaken across the entire U9 to U18 age groups. Where a club finishes in its last year of competition plays a very small role in where it plays the following year.

Finding 36

The allocation process for teams to go into the various divisions needs to be clear and understood.

Comment on Finding 36

It is essential that Clubs understand the allocation process and that it is open and transparent.

Finding 37

There was considerable support from the workshops for Models 3 or 4 or a mix of these models.

Comment on Finding 37

Whilst there was considerable support for Models 3 and 4, the sample size of attendees at the workshops was not significant.

As mentioned in the Limitations Section, the survey did not ask specific questions with regard to competition models or options for the future.

The above comments should not however preclude the considerable support from attendees for structural change in accordance with Models 3 or 4 or a mix thereof.

5.4.1 Future Junior Development

Finding 38

Any competition structure should reflect and have the capacity to adhere to and contribute to the "Football West Development Framework".

Comment on Finding 38

The Football West Development Framework asks the question:
“What is football success in Western Australia?”

The two “pillars” identified in assisting to answer this question were:
Grow the Participation Base and Improve Talent Development.

The principles that govern what strategic objectives are set and implemented are:

- Football is accessible and inclusive for all parts of the community.
- Football West provides competitions and programs to meet the consumer demand across a participant’s lifespan.
- Football (Football West and it’s clubs and associations) provide a fun and safe environment and positive experience.
- Talent selection is inclusive. As many participants as possible are exposed to high quality training environments.
- Resources are finite and are allocated to the areas that are crucial for participant development.

Survey – 78% of respondents believed youth development should be performance focused, not results focused and 89% believed a stable player base was conducive to youth development.

Finding 39

It is imperative that the role of Football West moving forward, and what it provides to clubs is fully understood.

Comment on Finding 39

The role of Football West in matters pertaining to junior competition and development should encompass the following:

- The establishment and implementation of the Strategic Directions for football statewide
- Provide leadership for clubs
- Provide the conduit to FA
- Provide education and training for coaches, referees, and administrators
- Provide appropriate competition structures for clubs
- Provide advice to clubs and their personnel on matters pertaining to club development, especially in the challenges they face in governance and facility development
- Provide a reference point for all levels of government in strategic matters pertaining to developing the game
- The provision expertise and expert advice
- Provide the framework and resources for an effect Talent Identification and subsequent development across the state

Football West should provide a “Statewide” service within its capacity and capability to do so.

Survey – 85% of respondents had concerns that information was not readily available about best practice development for junior players. This information is available but needs to be made easily accessible to all involved.

Finding 40

Any competition structure and associated support programs such as coach education, talent identification and the like need to be inclusive and accessible, especially in terms of cost to the participant.

Comment on Finding 40

Affordability should be a primary consideration in designing and implementing talent identification and development programs.

Finding 41

There needs to be a strong cooperative relationship with schools both State and Private, especially those schools offering “specialist” football programs.

Comment on Finding 41

Most sports have poor relationships with the school system, especially the PSA, in regard to upper school participation.

A strong cooperative relationship will assist in managing player “workloads”, burnout and progression through the football pathways.

Finding 42

Coach development is an essential component of any development system. Appropriate resources need to be invested into key components such as education and training, mentoring and evaluation.

Comment on Finding 42

Coaches have a significant impact and influence on a player reaching their potential. The quality of what they deliver and how they deliver it is paramount.

FA through their National Curriculum have developed a model based on “building blocks” in both the training and playing environments. These need to be fully understood by all coaches involved with developing talented players.

Coach education and competition rules should centre on ensuring each player has the opportunity through actual “game time” and “touches” to develop.

To facilitate this FQ introduced in 2023 rules and regulations that are designed to deliver benefits for young players through more touches on the ball and increased match minutes per player.

- The U13 age cohort play a 9 v 9 format in all competitions across the state.
- The 9 v 9 format is in place across all competitions (mixed/girls and community/advanced) which allows clubs and teams to ensure their recruitment and retention strategies reflect the advantages of this.
- The Under 13 fixtures are played on smaller fields with 35-minute halves.
- Squad sizes for all junior teams are capped at 13.

Survey – 95% of respondents believed that coach development through education was a significant contributor to youth development.

6. Recommendations

After detailed analysis of the information obtained through research and consultation in the form of meetings, workshops and a comprehensive survey, the Consultant makes the following recommendations;

Recommendation 1

Abolish the current Junior NPL competition structure and introduce a simple Divisional Structure within the Junior competition. This means that there would be no distinction between the current Junior NPL and the Community competitions. The new structure should be phased in over the next 2-3 years allowing clubs to adapt accordingly.

Recommendation 2

Introduce an appropriate number of top Divisions and teams per Division based on an estimate of the number of “quality” teams able to be fielded by clubs that will be competitive at this level. (Eg Two top divisions with 8 teams)

The number of Divisions should be increased over time commensurate with the ability of clubs to field competitive teams.

Recommendation 3

Any competition structure should provide the opportunity for talented players to play the recommended minimum number of games (30) for developmental purposes. This could be a mixture of regular competition matches, Cup games and any post regular competition matches.

Recommendation 4

There should be the opportunity for movement of teams between Divisions at every level from U13-U18. This should be based on one or a number of the following:

- Internal club assessment and nomination to a particular division.
- Finishing position in the last season of competition.
- The adoption of a “grading system” during the first 5 to 7 games of the season.

Movement between Divisions would provide an incentive for clubs to remain in the top Divisions and for aspiring clubs to retain their players and coaches and progress through to the top Divisions.

Recommendation 5

The current MiniRoos competition meets the needs of players and should be continued substantially in its present form.

Recommendation 6

Football West should consider introducing rules and regulations similar to FQ in terms of game time, “touches”, field size, squad size and number of on ground players per team (for certain age groups) that by design enhances the playing experience.

Recommendation 7

Should it be determined that due to the Western Australian football environment, female participants should be given specific consideration with respect to competition structures and development initiatives, Football West may consider it appropriate to undertake further consultation and engagement in this area.

Recommendation 8

Licensing criteria should be simplified and made achievable by clubs and should focus on:

- the coaching quality afforded by the Club given the importance of coaching in player development. (eg a “C” class coaching qualification to coach at the top levels).
- the need to provide an appropriate standard of facility however it is recognised that Club’s may not have control over their facilities due to local government ownership.

Recommendation 9

Clubs and teams would need to meet the any licensing criteria in order to nominate to the top Divisions and/or each Division prior to the start of each season. Clubs/Teams that meet the licensing criteria would then be assessed based on previous year’s performance and any known player data and if appropriate provided with the opportunity to be included in the Division nominated for.

Recommendation 10

Grading at the beginning of the season should be undertaken in the first 5-7 rounds to determine the appropriateness of teams in particular Divisions and appropriate adjustments made in an attempt to ensure competitive games each week.

Recommendation 11

Consideration should be given to running a “development league” in the “off” (summer) season that features opportunities for players to play at an advanced level and be subject to advance coaching (as in the South Australian model).

Recommendation 12

Football West should develop a strategy to forge good ongoing links between regional clubs/associations and Perth metropolitan clubs to enhance the player pathway.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 The Football West Development Framework
- 7.2 Junior Football in Western Australia Strategy Development - Project Terms of Reference – January 2023
- 7.3 Football West 2023 Junior Review WA – Review proposal
- 7.4 The current criteria for NPL Juniors
- 7.5 A paper prepared by Football West staff on the structure and profile of the current junior structure
- 7.6 Preworkshop questionnaire
- 7.7 Workshop notes

What is football success in Western Australia

Grow the participation base

To be a successful sport, football requires a large and growing participation base. This provides:

- Economies of scale for competitions and programs
- Strong opportunity for revenue reinvestment
- Ability to advocate to government and corporate partners
- Increased media recognition and coverage
- A large talent pool of players



Improve talent development

Football in WA needs to see a constant increase in the quality of players, coaches and referees being developed. This assists:

- Developing the success and profile of football on both the national and international stages
- Increasing transfer and development fees paid to clubs to support them
- Boosting the viewership of the local competitions
- Providing strong role models to boost participation

Principles



Football is **accessible and inclusive** for all parts of the community.



Football West provides **competitions and programs** to meet the consumer demand across a participants lifespan.



Football (Football West and its clubs and associations) provide a **fun and safe environment and positive experience.**



Talent selection is **inclusive.** As many participants as possible should be **exposed to high quality training environments.**



Resources are finite and are allocated to the areas **crucial for participant development.**

Underpinning the principles is **Strong Communication and Engagement** by Football West to the football community.

Development Framework



FOOTBALL
WEST

Principles	Alignment Low - High	Stakeholders Influenced Low - High	Impact on Participant Low - High	Efficiency Low - High
Accessible & Inclusive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost• Culture• Location• Gender• Ability				
Comps & Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand• Value for Money• Appropriate				
Environment & Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fun• Supportive• Safe• Appropriate				
Talent Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Assured• Long Term• Non-Linear• Individual Focus				



FOOTBALL **WEST**

Junior Football in Western Australia

Strategy Development

Project Terms of Reference – January 2023

1. Purpose

The WA Junior Strategy Development Project (Project) is designed to establish the framework for the development of all junior football in Western Australia for the next 5 years.

2. Background

The structure and format of junior football in Western Australia, particularly in the boy's metropolitan competitions, has undergone several changes over the past 30 plus years.

Since 2014, the identified pathway for talented junior boys has been through the National Premier League (NPL) competition. After the initial implementation of the competition with 12 teams, the Junior NPL Boys competition currently has 22 clubs, including two in regional WA.

To ensure a focus on long term talent development, the Junior NPL Boys was decoupled from the NPLWA Men's competition meaning that senior clubs relegated from the NPLWA Men's competition would not lose their Junior NPL Boys status.

Prior to 2019, senior men's clubs who were promoted to the NPLWA Men's competition would also receive promotion to the Junior NPL Boys competition. Due to the continually increasing numbers of the boy's competition, this policy was removed. Since this time there has been no additional clubs enter the Junior NPL Boys competition.

Grading structures have been introduced to the Junior NPL Boys competition to allow for even, competitive games as much as practicable.

Outside of the Junior NPL Boys competition, the Junior Boys Leagues operate from Division 1 downwards from U13s on.

The changes in metropolitan junior girl's football competitions have almost all been due to the staggering of girls' competitions to every second year. Changes have resulted in age groups based on even or odd years e.g., U12s, U14s, U16s as against U11s, U13s, U15s.

Currently Football West operates age groups on even years, however with the continuing increase of female participants, age groups are slowly being filled out to single years as per the boys' competitions.

Regional junior football competition has undergone less changes over time. The competitions themselves are driven by the regional association with a strong focus on community and grassroots. Country Week remains as a central focus for regions for both competition and talent identification, whilst Football West has worked collaboratively with regional associations to grow additional talent development programs across Western Australia.

Regional junior football competitions are generally held during Term 2 and 3 only.

3. Deliverable

The project will deliver a strategy that establishes the framework for junior talent development and competitions, both short and long term. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by August 2023 and that the outcomes, where applicable and feasible, will be implemented in 2024.

4. Project Management Structure

The management of the project will be two-tiered and consist of a Project Control Group and a Project Working Group. These two working groups will comprise:

4.1 Project Control Group

- Football West Game Development Committee
- Jamie Harnwell, CEO
- Perry Ielati, General Manager – Football
- Ernie Merrick, Chief Football Officer, Football Australia (TBC)
- Rae Dower, Female Football Technical Director, Football Australia (TBC)

4.2 Project Working Group

- Dan Israel, Competitions and Clubs Manager
- Gareth Naven, Policy and Advocacy Manager
- Athena Razmovski, Operations Support Manager
- Sarah du Plessis, Female Football and Advocacy Manager
- Sauda Omar, Competitions Project Officer
- Kelly Cross, Sydney FC (TBC)

5. Process

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

- Desktop review of existing quantitative data, including review of other Member Federation structures;
- 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, Metro, Masters Standing Committee
- Junior Standing Committee
- Women's Standing Committee

- Coaches Standing Committee
- Clubs/Associations, including NPL and community, metropolitan and regional
- Parents of Junior Players
- Coaches
- Broader Football Community
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- Football Australia

6. Project administration, monitoring and reporting

6.1 Project Control Group (PCG)

The PCG will meet monthly (or such other period as they determine) and report to the Board through the Game Development Committee.

6.2 Project Working Group (PWG)

The PWG will meet fortnightly (or such other period as they determine) and report to the PCG through the submission of written updates prepared by the Projects Officer.

7. In scope

The project will consider all aspects of junior talent development and competition structures in the U13s-U18s age groups currently serviced by NPL Junior Boys, Junior Boys Community Leagues, Junior Girls Community Leagues and appropriate regional junior competitions. Some of the key considerations to be considered as part of the Project include, but are not limited to:

7.1 Talent Development priorities

- Quality and quantity of matches and training
- Physical maturation, late developers
- Philosophy of development
- Education of parents
- Holistic environment
- Representative and talent identification opportunities

7.2 Design

- Licencing and Eligibility Criteria
- Accessibility
- Inclusivity
- Cost
- Pathways
- Transparency

7.3 Administrative demands (Football West and Football Australia)

- Technology and systems
- Reducing volunteer burden
- Compliance

- Training compensation / tracking

7.4 Coaching qualifications

- Accreditation levels
- Education design, delivery and support

7.5 Facility requirements

- Training and playing
- Other

8. Out of scope

Aspects of the NPLWA Men's and/or Women's competitions, including supporting senior age groups are specifically excluded from the project. This includes those elements that are controlled by Football Australia including the introduction of the National Club Licencing system.

In addition, the MiniRoos competitions (including U12s), as a Football Australia product are also excluded from the project.

Football West 2023 Junior Review WA

Review Proposal



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Background



- ❖ Junior Structure in WA has undergone several changes through-out previous 30 years and Community Junior Participation is ever increasing (Power BI 2018 – 2023 comparison)
- ❖ Current pathways for advanced Junior development is;
 - NPL Juniors: a League status held by clubs who applied in the years 2014 – 2018. At current this pathway has been met with challenges.
 - NTC Program: a Football West run program which identifies talented players for further development and conditioning.
- ❖ Regional Junior Football is primarily managed regional associations, Football West endeavours to identify Junior Talent in the regions through programs, events such as Country Week and through providing associations and coaches with the resources to source junior talent and improve football development.
- ❖ The last review related Juniors was in 2017, and was primarily focused on NPL Juniors. Recommendations from this report will lead the objectives for the 2023 Junior Review.
- ❖ Football West, in 2023, endeavour to understand the nature of the Junior Community and existing Advancement Pathway Competitions and Programs, recognising where intervention is required and establish a strategic plan to address barriers to development and talent identification.

Objectives

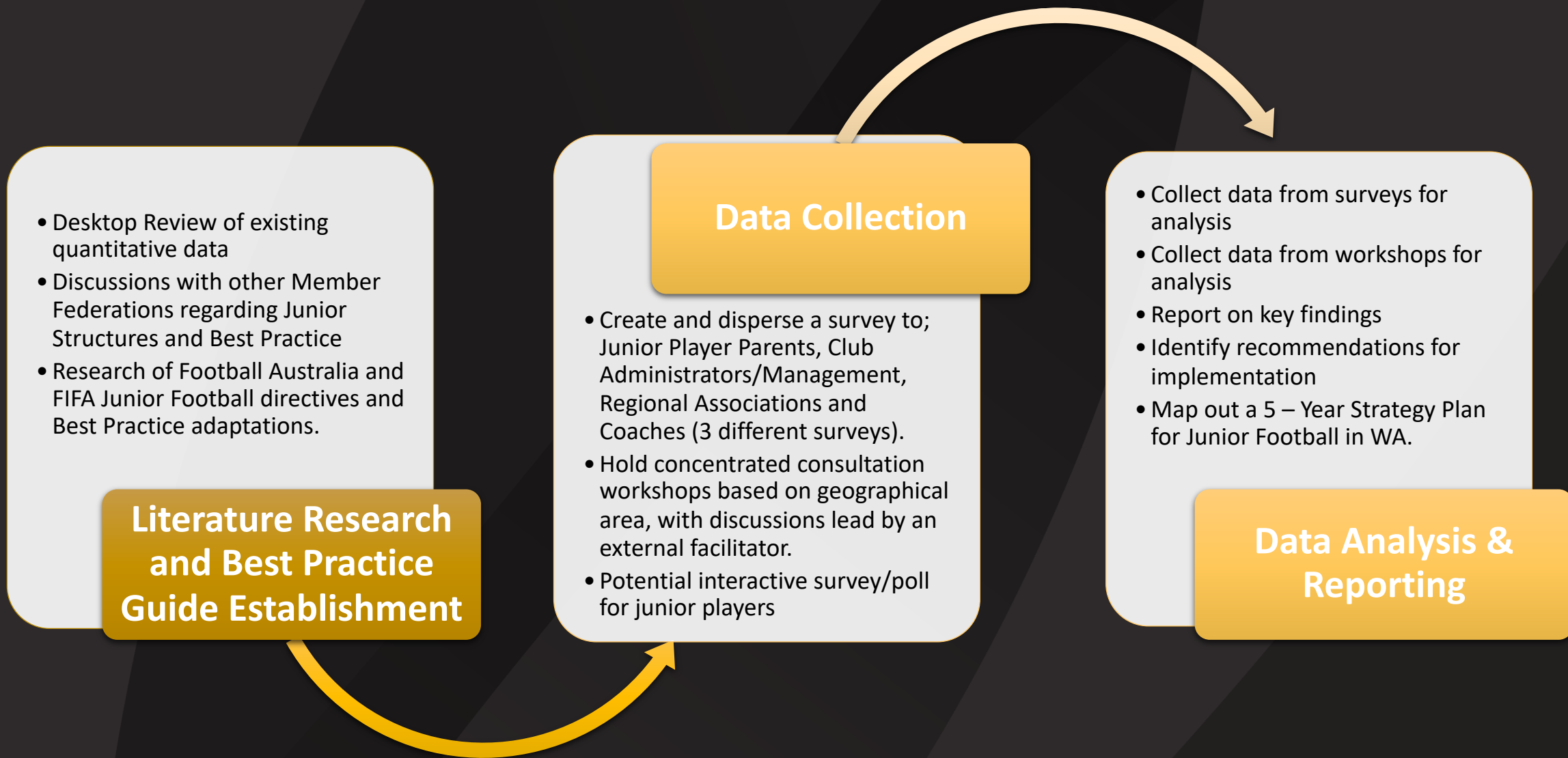
Competition Structure & Format

- Analyse the competition format and structure for: Community Junior, NPL Juniors, NTC, Regional Juniors.
- Understanding limitations presented by Competition Structure and Format.
- Analyse developmental pathways opportunities created by the Competition Structure and Format.
- Analyse regulations in Junior Competitions that support/hinder football development.
- Evaluate changes made in recent years to the Junior Competitions, for improvement.

Junior Development

- Understand and evaluating existing growth and developmental pathways across competitions. (With a strong focus on NPL Juniors)
- Analyse the current landscape of progressive and competitive games for improvement.
- Analyse developmental opportunities and pathways provided by NPL Juniors Competition.
- Assess the accessibility and inclusivity of existing junior developmental programs.
- Evaluate the point of success and failure of existing identification pathways (including NPL Juniors), for future improvement.

Methodology



Methodology:

Key Factors



❖ Literature Research and Best Practice Guides established

- Project Working Group have developed the below framework as a guide to establish what criteria will be used as the functionality and success of current Junior Competition and programs

Developmental Objectives	Desired Criteria (Best Practice)	Current Football West Practice	Current On-Ground Practice	Future Recommendations & Suggestions to close the Gap

❖ Data Collection

- Workshops will be held at clubs, to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere
- Parents/ Public Workshops to be held first and with a month gap to provide feedback to clubs, ahead of capturing there feedback
- An interactive survey/poll will be looked at for Juniors to complete and participate in the review.

❖ Data Analysis and Reporting

- Surveys will contain mostly measurable questions, for ease of data extraction, however we will also capture qualitative data
- The Project Working Group aim to provide a variations of suggestions for future implementation (i.e. 2/3 different models of a 5 year plan). The recommendations following this review will be concentrated and not many (e.g. max 5 – 8 achievable recommendations).

Review Schedule



	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Desktop Review and Analysis of Literature	Yellow	Yellow					
Public Survey		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
Interactive Junior Players Survey/Webpage Poll			Grey	Yellow	Yellow		
Consultation Workshop; North 1 (Parents/Public)			Grey	Yellow			
Consultation Workshop; North 2 (Club Personnel)			Grey		Yellow		
Consultation Workshop; Central 1 (Parents/Public)			Grey	Yellow			
Consultation Workshop; Central 2 (Club Personnel)			Grey		Yellow		
Consultation Workshop; South 1 (Parents/Public)			Grey	Yellow			
Consultation Workshop; South 2 (Club Personnel)					Yellow		
Consultation Workshop; Regional (Parents/Public, second session: Club Personnel)				Grey	Yellow		
Analysis of Data Collected					Yellow	Yellow	
Communication to Football Community/Public		Yellow		Yellow	Yellow		
Standing Committee Consultation	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Internal Consultation (Football West Internal Staff, WGC, PCG)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Report Finalisation and Endorsement from GDC and FW Board.						Yellow	Yellow

Project risks & limitations



- ❖ Limitation 1: The review is being run over the course of four and a half months, this causes limitations to in-depth community engagement and consultation, as well as research analysis and deliberation. Football West is only able to provide a concentrated 2 months to public consultation.
- ❖ Limitation 2: The stakeholder consultation group and scope of review is vast in comparison to the time and resources allocated to the review.
- ❖ Limitation 3: There are 23 Recommendations to address, as a result from the Football West 2017 NPL Review, which encapsulated the NPL Juniors. The review will have to observe, analyse and implement future changes within the boundaries of addressing these Recommendations. The review is not constrained to this recommendations, but they will need to be acknowledged in some form.
- ❖ In recognition of the limitations presented, Football West endeavours to provide opportunity within reason to the public, provide communications ahead of consultation workshops for the public to have ample preparation time to arrange their attendance to a workshop and ensure all relevant stakeholders are consulted.



**NATIONAL
PREMIER LEAGUES**

*Compliance
Regulations*

Article 1 - Jurisdiction

1. These regulations are made by Football West Limited (**Football West**) pursuant to the Football West Constitution.
2. All Clubs that are admitted to the NPLWA Competition are bound by these regulations.
3. These regulations must be read in conjunction with:
 - a) National Premier Leagues Application for Licence submitted by each Club;
 - b) National Premier Leagues Competition Rules;
 - c) Football West Competition Management Regulations;
 - d) Football West Constitution;
 - e) Football West Disciplinary & Grievance Regulations; and
 - f) FIFA Laws of the Game.

Article 2 - Definitions & Interpretation

1. In these regulations and unless this document provides otherwise, capitalised terms have the same meaning as set out in the NPL Competition Rules, Disciplinary and Grievance Regulations and the Football West Constitution. The following terms have the meaning ascribed to them for the purposes of this document:
 - a) **Application** means the application lodged by each Club seeking inclusion in the NPLWA Competition;
 - b) **D&G Tribunal** means the tribunal established by Football West pursuant to the Disciplinary & Grievance Regulations;
 - c) **FA** means Football Australia;
 - d) **FIFA** means Fédération Internationale de Football Association;
 - e) **Match** means any game of football which is part of the NPLWA Competition conducted by or under the control of Football West;
 - f) **Team** means any one or more of the group of players set out in Article 3 -of these regulations which represents the Club (whether formally or informally) in the NPLWA Competition, as determined by Football West;
2. In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - a) headings and subheadings are for convenience only do not affect the interpretation of this document;
 - b) words denoting any gender include all genders;
 - c) words denoting the singular include the plural and words denoting the plural include the singular;
 - d) references to a person include any individual, corporation or other body corporate, partnership, joint venture, trust, association and any other government entity recognised by law and vice versa;
 - e) where a word or phrase or expression is defined, other parts of speech and grammatical forms of that definition have a corresponding meaning;

- f) any reference to a party to any agreement or document include that party's permitted successors and assignees;
- g) any reference to any agreement or document includes that agreement or document as amended at any time;
- h) any reference to a paragraph number refers to the paragraph number of the current Article unless stated otherwise;
- i) specifying anything in this agreement after the terms 'includes', 'include', 'including', 'for example', 'such as' or any similar expression does not limit the meaning of the words, description, definition, phrase or term preceding those terms unless there is express wording to the contrary;
- j) the expression 'at any time' includes reference to past, present and future time and the performance of any action from time to time;
- k) reference to a statute includes all regulations and amendments to that statute and any statute passed in substitution for that statute or incorporating any of its provisions to the extent that they are incorporated;
- l) all monetary amounts are in Australian dollars and are inclusive of GST unless stated otherwise; and
- m) a reference to a Category 1 breach, a Category 2 breach or a Category 3 breach is a reference to a breach of these Regulations having, subject to these Regulations, the penalty specified in Appendix B

Article 3 - Teams – NPLWA-M Seniors

1. Each Club is required to field at least one of each of the Teams set out below in every Competition Season for all Matches they are scheduled for:
 - a) First Team;
 - b) Under 20s;
 - c) Under 18s;
 - d) Under 16s;
 - e) Under 15s;
 - f) Under 14s; and
 - g) Under 13s.
2. The requirements in paragraph 1(d)-(g) may be satisfied either in the NPL Juniors or in the Junior Boys League.
3. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, the first breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 3 breach.
4. For the avoidance of doubt and for the purpose of determining the number of breaches of paragraph 1 of Article 3, a contravention of paragraph 1 of Article 3 (that is failing to field a Team) will be aggregated across all age groups. For example:
 - a) Failing to field a Team in one age group constitutes the first offence;
 - b) Failing to field a Team in the same or different age group constitutes the second offence;
 - c) Failing to field a Team in the same or different age group constitutes the third or subsequent offence.

Article 4 - Teams – NPLWA-W Seniors

1. Each Club is required to field at least one of each of the Teams set out below in every Competition Season for all Matches they are scheduled for:
 - a) First Team;
 - b) Under 21s; and
 - c) At least one Team in the Junior Girls League or MiniRoos Girls Team.
2. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 3 breach.
3. For the avoidance of doubt and for the purpose of determining the number of breaches of paragraph 1 of Article 3, a contravention of paragraph 1 of Article 4 (that is failing to field a Team) will be aggregated across all age groups. For example:
 - a) Failing to field a Team in one age group constitutes the first offence;
 - b) Failing to field a Team in the same or different age group constitutes the second offence;
 - c) Failing to field a Team in the same or different age group constitutes the third or subsequent offence.

Article 5 - Teams – NPLWA Juniors

1. Each Club is required to field at least one of each of the Teams set out below in every Competition Season for all games they are scheduled for:
 - a) Under 16s;
 - b) Under 15s;
 - c) Under 14s; and
 - d) Under 13s.
2. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 3 breach.
3. For the avoidance of doubt and for the purpose of determining the number of breaches of paragraph 1 of Article 3, a contravention of paragraph 1 of Article 3 (that is failing to field a Team) will be aggregated across all age groups. For example:
 - a) Failing to field a Team in one age group constitutes the first offence;
 - b) Failing to field a Team in the same or different age group constitutes the second offence;
 - c) Failing to field a Team in the same or different age group constitutes the third or subsequent offence.

Article 6 - Coaching Qualifications

1. In each Competition Season, every Club must appoint and retain one coach for each Team and one Technical Director for the Club.
2. The minimum qualifications for 2022 for each of the positions listed in Article 3 - paragraph 1 are as follows:

a) Technical Director	B Licence
b) First team coach	B Licence
c) Under 20s coach	C Licence
d) Under 18s coach	C Licence
e) Under 16s coach	C Licence
f) Under 15s coach	C Licence
g) Under 14s coach	C Licence
h) Under 13s coach	C Licence
3. Football West may, in its absolute discretion, grant an exemption to the minimum qualifications set out in paragraph 2 if an intended coach or Technical Director is undertaking an appropriate qualification course at the commencement of each Competition Season.
4. Should a Technical Director or coach leave a Club during a Competition Season, that Club must inform Football West in writing within 2 Business Days of the date of departure. Within 10 Business Days of the date of departure, the Club must inform Football West in writing of its intended timeframe for the replacement of the Technical Director or coach (as the case may be). If Football West deems a Club's intended replacement timeframe to be unacceptable, the Club and Football West must within 10 Business Days, meet to agree on a timeframe.
5. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article in the same Competition Season is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article in the same Competition Season is a Category 3 breach.

Article 7 - Governance

1. Each Club must ensure that its constitution gives every registered player and fee-paying stakeholder rights associated with full membership of the Club, including but not limited to full voting rights in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (WA)*.
2. Each Club must conduct an Annual General Meeting in each calendar year in which that Club is admitted to the NPLWA Competition.
3. Each Club must host at least one public forum in each calendar year in which that Club is admitted to the NPLWA Competition, inviting parents of players, players, members, and sponsors to participate. Football West strongly encourages each NPL Club to hold a minimum of two public forums. A Club may conduct a public forum at the same time as its Annual General Meeting.
4. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article is a Category 3 breach.

5. For the purpose of making a determination of whether a breach has occurred under paragraph 4 above, Football West may, in determining the category of breach and the resulting penalty, calculate the number of breaches by reference to the relevant Club's conduct across all Competition Seasons in which that Club participated and not only the Competition Season in which a breach occurred.

Article 8 - Finance

1. Each Club must maintain financial records in the form and substance as required by relevant accounting standards and the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* (WA) and all other laws.
2. Each Club must, within 3 Business Days of a written request from Football West or FA, make available for inspection or provide true copies of the following to Football West or FA:
 - any of the financial records described in paragraph 1;
 - the books, records, financial statement and any other documentation relating to the relevant Club.
3. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article is a Category 3 breach.
4. In determining the category of breach and the resulting penalty, Football West may calculate the number of breaches is to be calculated by reference to the an offending Club's conduct across all Competition Seasons in which that Club participated not only the Competition Season in which a breach occurred.

Article 9 - Facilities

1. A Senior's Club home venue must meet the standards set out in Appendix B. A Junior's Club home venue must meet the standards of a Class D venue as described in the Football West Competition Management Regulations.
2. Should a Club's home venue deteriorate to the point that the venue no longer meets the standards in as described in paragraph 1, that Club must inform Football West within 2 Business Days of such deterioration.
3. If Football West receives a notification from a Club pursuant to paragraph 2, or itself makes a determination that a Club's home venue does not meet the standards as described in paragraph 1, the Club and Football West must meet within 5 Business Days and use reasonable endeavours to agree on the action the Club must take to rectify the failure to comply with paragraph 1, the time period within which those action must be completed and the establishment of any interim arrangements that may be required by Football West. If the relevant Club and Football West do not reach an agreement within a reasonable time prescribed by Football West, Football West may direct the Club in writing to undertake specific actions to rectify the failure to comply with paragraph 1 within a time period prescribed by Football West.

4. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article is a Category 3 breach.
5. In determining the category of breach and the resulting penalty, Football West may calculate the number of breaches by reference to an offending Club's conduct across all Competition Seasons in which that Club participated not only the Competition Season in which a breach occurred.

Article 10 - Medical

1. In each Competition Season, each Club must appoint a medical professional to attend to the medical treatment of players in the First Team, the under 20s and the under 18s Teams. Medical professionals must be listed on the Team Sheet and occupy the Technical Area for each Match in which those Teams play.
2. The minimum qualification for a medical professional is a Level 1 Sports Trainer certificate as recognised and certified by Sports Medicine Australia or a qualified physiotherapist whose name is listed in the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency website.
3. A Club that wishes to appoint a medical professional whose qualifications do not meet those specified in this Article 9 may apply to Football West to have that medical professional approved for that Club.
4. Should a medical professional leave the Club during a Competition Season, that Club must inform Football West in writing within 2 Business Days of the date of departure. The Club and Football West will then meet within 5 Business Days of such notification in order to agree on a timeframe for the replacement of that medical professional.
5. During a Competitive Season for NPLWA Juniors Matches a person qualified in first aid must be in attendance.
6. In each NPLWA Juniors Match, the home team must have a person with a valid Senior First Aid Certificate present at the ground. A person who is also present as medical professional for the purposes of Matches described in paragraph 1 will be considered to have a valid certification for the purposes of this paragraph.
7. For the purpose of determining a penalty for a breach of this Article, a first breach of this Article in any one Competition Season is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this Article in the same Competition Season is a Category 2 breach. A third and subsequent breach of this Article in the same Competition Season is a Category 3 breach.

Article 11 - Reporting & Documentation

1. Each Club must comply with the reporting and documentation submission requirements as set out in Appendix C by the dates and times specified in Appendix C.
2. The categorisation of breaches of this Article and the applicable penalty is set out in Appendix C.

Article 12 - Football West Powers & Discretion

1. Notwithstanding any other Article in these regulations, Football West may, in its absolute discretion and for the sole benefit of the NPLWA Competition as a whole:
 - a) vary any time frame specified in these regulations for compliance with any Article; and/or
 - b) impose any one or more conditions on a Club that is otherwise in breach of these regulations as a condition to that Club remaining in the NPLWA Competition; and/or
 - c) require a Club to meet with Football West to discuss breaches or potential breaches of these regulations.
2. Any party affected by a decision made by Football West under this Article 11 will be notified in writing by Football West of such a decision.
3. Football West may audit or request documentation from a NPLWA Club at any point in its absolute discretion.

Article 13 - Breaches & Penalties

1. A breach by a Club of any Article in these regulations will result in that Club being liable to the penalty specified in the relevant Article and in Appendix A.
2. Football West must, by notice in writing, inform a Club of any breach of these regulations and the resulting penalty.
3. Any notice issued pursuant to paragraph 2 for a Category 1 & 2 breach:
 - a) is final and binding on the relevant Club;
 - b) constitutes conclusive evidence of the commission of the breach; and
 - c) is not subject to review by the D&G Tribunal.
4. Any notice issued pursuant to paragraph 2 for a Category 3 breach is:
 - a) prima facie, evidence of the commission of the breach; and
 - b) may be subject to review by the D&G Tribunal.
5. Notwithstanding paragraphs 1 & 2, Football West may, in its absolute and unfettered discretion, whether or not a notice has been issued pursuant to paragraph 2, meet and negotiate with any Club that has or may be about to breach these regulations in order to assist that Club to rectify or prevent any such breach, with or without the imposition of conditions in order to maintain the integrity of the NPLWA Competition.

Appendix A

Category of Breach and associated Penalty

Category	Penalty
Category 1	\$500. The Club will be required to rectify the breach within a timeframe set by Football West and subject to such other conditions as are determined by Football West.
Category 2	An immediate financial penalty of \$1,000. In addition to the financial penalty, the Club will be required to rectify the breach within a timeframe set by Football West and subject to such other conditions as are determined by Football West.
Category 3	An immediate financial penalty of not more than \$5,000 or expulsion from the NPL WA Competition, as determined by Football West. If a financial penalty is imposed, in addition to the financial penalty, the Club will be required to rectify the breach within a timeframe set by Football West or the D&G Tribunal and subject to such other conditions as determined by Football West or the D&G Tribunal (as the case may be).

Appendix B

Minimum Venue Requirements for NPLWA Seniors

Field of Play		
Criterion	Minimum Requirement	Recommended
Dimensions	Field of Play must satisfy the requirements of the Laws of the Game with a minimum width of 60m.	105m x 68m
Perimeter Fence	A temporary or permanent fence fully enclosing the field of play, with a recommended height between 800mm and 1000mm. Any temporary fencing must be approved by Football West. Where it is not possible to erect a perimeter fence, Football West may negotiate alternative arrangements.	An access gate for an ambulance, which is kept closed except when the ambulance is required to move onto the Field of Play is recommended.
Technical Area	Must be present and comply with recommendations in the Laws of the Game. Technical Areas must be wholly inside the perimeter fence.	Technical areas should be either side and equidistant from the halfway line with a maximum distance of 10 metres between each technical area.
Team Benches	There must be seating for 10 people inside each Technical Area.	A separate chair with a backrest should be provided for each person who will occupy the technical areas.
Playing Surface	Must be smooth and level to allow the players and Match Officials the confidence of movement that would not contribute in any way to injuries or unexpected falls.	
Line Markings	Must be white. No other line markings other than those required under the Laws of the Game may be present on the Field of Play.	Marks may be made OFF the field of play 9.15m (10 yards) from the corner arc and at right angles to the goal lines and touch lines to assist match officials at corner kicks. Marks should be made in white paint.
Goalposts	Must be white and when stained by bore water or some other agent, goalposts must be cleaned.	Goal nets should not be suspended by any kind of metal frame or elbow but by some other method which does not constitute a danger to players (e.g. box nets).

Equipment	A stretcher, 4 corner flags that are free from advertising	
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Venue Facilities		
Criterion	Minimum Requirement	Recommended
Signage	24 linear metres is to be reserved for FA Sponsorship (Need to Change once confirmed) signage comprising 8 metres on the centre of the far side of the field (4 metres each side of the half-way line) and 8 metres behind each goal.	
Seating Capacity	A permanent structure specifically designed for seating spectators situated outside the clubrooms that provides unobstructed viewing to the field of play and that provides seating for a minimum of 120 people. The structure must be approved by Football West.	A permanent structure specifically designed for seating spectators situated outside the clubrooms that provides unobstructed viewing to the field of play and that provides under cover seating for a minimum of 500 people. The structure must be approved by Football West.
Food and Drinks	The venue must have selling points for food and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.	In addition, an exclusive area for sponsors and VIPs should be set aside.
Toilets	Male and Female Public toilets which are away from the team change rooms and accessible to all spectators.	A public disabled toilet should be provided.
Parking	Sufficient parking for match officials close to the Match Officials' change room.	50 bays for players and team officials.

Change Rooms		
Criterion	Minimum Requirement	Recommended
Home and Away Teams	Must be separate from each other and be large enough for 20 people. Must have hot and cold water showers, toilets which are separate from the public toilets and clothes hanging facilities.	Other equipment recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard and pens • Mirror & Washbasin • Power Points • Refrigerator
Match Officials	Must be separate from team change rooms and be large enough for 4 people. Must have a hot and cold water shower, a toilet and clothes hanging facilities. The Match Officials' change room may not be used for any other purpose (eg. storage) and MUST be lockable.	Match Officials should be able to move to the team change rooms without going through an open area or an area to which spectators and the general public has access. Other equipment recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror & Washbasin • Power Points
		Refrigerator
Signage	All rooms must be clearly marked as to their purposes.	

Sports Presentation		
Criterion	Minimum Requirement	Recommended
PA System	A PA system of sufficient volume to be heard throughout the complete spectator area is required.	A system that can handle both music and speech simultaneously. A CD player or some other means through which music can be played through loudspeakers in the main spectator area. Wireless microphone connected to the PA System.

Scoreboard	A scoreboard erected on one side of the Field of Play, which is visible to people on the opposite side of the Field of Play. The scoreboard must be able to display unique team names and team scores.	
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Medical		
Criterion	Minimum Requirement	Recommended
Treatment Table	An undercover treatment table must be present, which is able to be used by both teams.	A separate Athletes Medical Room is recommended with two treatment tables.

Appendix C

Reporting and Document Submission

Document	Description	Date Required	Category of Breach for Non-Compliance
Youth Training Plan	A youth training plan in the format and with the content set down by Football West	Last Business Day of February each year	A breach of this requirement is a Category 1 breach. A second breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.
List of Coaches	A report which identifies the coach of each team in the Club's NPL structure which also outlines each coach's qualifications	Last Business Day of February each year	A breach of this requirement is a Category 1 breach. A second or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach.
List of Medical Professionals	A report which identifies the medical professional for the first and the under 20s teams in the Club's NPL structure which also outlines each medical professional's qualifications	Last Business Day of February each year	A breach of this requirement is a Category 1 breach. A second or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach.
Club Constitution	A copy of the Club's most recent version of its constitution	Upon entry into the NPLWA or upon adoption of new constitution.	Category 1.
Date of AGM	The date and time of the Club's Annual General Meeting for each year	Five Business Days before the date of the AGM	Category 1. A second or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach.
Date of Public Forum	The date and time of each of the Club's Public Forums for each year with a description of the people to whom invitations have been sent	Five Business Days before the date of the Public Forum	Category 1.

Player Agent Statutory	A statutory declaration submitted by the	Last Business Day of each calendar year	Category 1. A second breach of this
Declaration	president of the Club that details the existence and terms of any contractual, financial or other relationship with a Player Agent		requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.
Academy Statutory Declaration	A statutory declaration submitted by the president of the Club that details the existence and terms of any contractual, financial or other relationship that the Club has with an overseas or interstate club, including, but not limited to, the promotion of a brand associated with that overseas club.	Last Business Day of each calendar year	Category 1. A second breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.
Management Structure	The Club must document its management structure to include position titles, positions descriptions and the name of staff filling such positions.	Last Business Day of February each year. Thereafter 10 Business Days after any amendment, alteration or substitution.	Category 1. A second breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.
Technical Report	The Club Technical Director must submit a report containing an assessment of the training programs conducted across each youth team. The report will also provide an assessment of talented players applying assessment criteria determined by the State Technical Director.	Within 20 Business Days of the end of the NPLWA season.	Category 1. A second breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.

<p>Audited Financial Statements</p>	<p>Within 4 months of the end of the Club's Financial Year. The Club must inform Football West of the date of the end of its Financial Year by the last Business Day of February each year.</p>	<p>Category 1. A second breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.</p>
<p>Annual Report</p>	<p>The Club must submit an annual report which summarises the activities undertaken in all areas of the club, the successes achieved and areas for further development.</p>	<p>Within 20 Business Days of the completion of the Annual General Meeting</p> <p>Category 1. A second breach of this requirement is a Category 2 breach. A third or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.</p>
<p>Player Fees</p>	<p>The Club must submit a report in the format detailed by Football West. The report must contain a breakdown of the costs incurred in delivering the programs and will be assessed by the Football West and FA for their reasonableness. Both FA and Football West shall have the power to require the Club to validate information contained in the report or to require the Club to revise its proposed fees.</p>	<p>Last Business Day of February each year</p> <p>Category 1 - failure to submit by the start of season automatically elevates the breach to Category 2. A second or subsequent breach of this requirement is a Category 3 breach.</p>

Reiteration of Junior Review Objectives:

Competition Structure & Format:

- Analyse the competition format and structure for: Community Junior, NPL Juniors, NTC, Regional Juniors.
- Understanding limitations presented by Competition Structure and Format.
- Analyse developmental pathways opportunities created by the Competition Structure and Format.
- Analyse regulations in Junior Competitions that support/hinder football development.
- Evaluate changes made in recent years to the Junior Competitions, for improvement.

Junior Development:

- Understand and evaluating existing growth and developmental pathways across competitions. (With a strong focus on NPL Juniors)
- Analyse the current landscape of progressive and competitive games for improvement.
- Analyse developmental opportunities and pathways provided by NPL Juniors Competition.
- Assess the accessibility and inclusivity of existing junior developmental programs.
- Evaluate the point of success and failure of existing identification pathways (including NPL Juniors), for future improvement.

Football West Outcomes by end of this Review:

- Identify Challenges across the board in all Junior Competitions
- Identify what in the Competition Structure is supporting Junior players and their development, and what is not.
- Identify what changes if any need to be made to Competition Pathways and Structure to help players progress how they want/need to
- Identify a solution for the NPL Juniors Competition

Junior Boys League	Junior Girls League	Miniroos Competition	In-house Junior Competitions and Academies
<p>This is a mixed competition. Where junior boys and girls are able to join any team under this Competition League.</p> <p>The Junior Boys League contains the following competitions:</p> <p>Under 13s Under 14s Under 15s Under 16s Under 18s</p> <p>Each of the above mentioned, has divisions beneath it. i.e. Under 13s League will be split into:</p> <p>Under 13s Division 1 Under 13s Division 2 Under 13s North Division 1 Under 13s South Division 1</p> <p>The amount of Divisions, is solely dependent on the number of teams within that league. Football aim to have no more than 10 teams per Division. On average each League varies from 4 – 7 Divisions.</p> <p>18 Matches are played per Calendar year.</p>	<p>This is a female only competitions.</p> <p>The Junior Girls League contains the following competitions:</p> <p>Under 13s (introduced this year) Under 14s Under 16s Under 17s (introduced this year)</p> <p>Alike the Junior Boys competition, within each League in the Junior Girls League, are Divisions.</p> <p>The number of teams found in the Junior Girls League is very few when compared to the Junior Boys League, and Football west has seen data trends of struggling participation numbers over the past 5 years. However, the numbers continue to project upwards slowly. On average each League varies 1 – 3 Divisions.</p> <p>18 Matches are played per Calendar year.</p>	<p>This League contains the following Competitions:</p> <p>Under 6s Under 7s Under 8s Under 8s Junior Girls Under 9s Under 10s Under 10s Junior Girls Under 11s Under 12s Under 12s Junior Girls</p> <p>Aside the Leagues deemed ‘Junior Girls’ the teams within each above-named Leagues from Under 8s is classified with a colour and animal rather than a division.</p> <p>For example: Under 8s Yellow Wombats Under 8s Purple Koalas</p> <p>The colour represents the competition strength, and the animal represents the geographical area of the team. In order teams are grouped to their ability.</p> <p>16 - 18 Matches are played per Calendar year.</p>	<p>These are competitions run by the Clubs themselves with their players registered to Football West’s registration management system.</p> <p>These competitions allow clubs creativity to manage their junior demographic.</p> <p>There is less than 5 in-house Junior Products registered to Football West. With the club with largest in-house product having >1000 participants in that program and the club with the smallest in house product having 6 participants.</p> <p>Clubs will usually design or have these products for children aged 5 – 9 years old and have never played football before.</p>

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The current structure of the Football West Junior Competitions: Community Juniors (Metro)

The current structure of the Football West Junior Competitions: Community Juniors (Metro)

Some processing that pertains to the current structure of the Community Juniors Competition:

❖ How teams are placed into Divisions

- Over the past decade the process for teams in Divisions under the Community Juniors league has been a self-nominating one with a reset each year.
- Clubs are provided with a 3 – 4 week window, “Team Nominations” period, where they identify to Football West which Junior teams they have and under which Division do they believe the team belongs to/performs in.
- Clubs are not guaranteed their team will remain in the selection they chose, and Football West moves teams as needed into different Divisions.
- Additionally, the first 4 weeks of the Junior Competition are know as “regrading weeks”.
- This means, if clubs notice their teams are not fit for the Division i.e. the competition strength is too strong (a team is losing 20 nil each week) or the competition strength is too week (a team is winning 20 nil each week) the club may request a change in Division to Football West.
- Further, if Football West recognise any outliers without being prompted by a club, they will change where a team is placed.
- The method above allows clubs to work with Football West in choosing where they believe they fit best, then fine tuning teams’ placements afterwards.

Pros to process

- It allows for an accurate portrayal of Divisions per League; there is no set number of Divisions that Football West struggle to fill because the Divisions are created as the Teams are nominated.
- Clubs are familiar with the process, and it has been working.
- It assists Football West in placing Teams into Divisions
- The process accommodates for the social nature of the Junior Competition; no general consistency in teams, therefore if a club has a new set of players and needs to be moved into a lower Division, this process supports that.

Cons to process

- Admin work of the regrading and shuffling process can be extensive and miscalculated.
- Some teams submit their nominations late.
- Football West relies on a new set of information from clubs each year, a month – 2 months in advance of the Season commencing.
- Football West is unable to conduct certain other activities i.e. order medals for Competitions, until the number of Divisions and Teams is known.
- Teams do not remain in the position they finish last year (no promotion/relegation)

Review Point: Continue to explore the success rate and where to improve on this process.

❖ Underlying aspects/insider look of each League.

Junior Boys League

- The League stretches from social to competitive.
- Participation numbers are generally healthy.
- There is a trend with Junior Boys commonly playing in a division their age or one year above their age, an estimated calculation based on ladder standings in the past 3 years shows this is to improve their performance and development, overall, the concept of pushing themselves to better their play.
- Each Team, in each division will 98%* of the time have a coach. The coaches for teams in this league are generally not qualified and are parents, previous players, club volunteers.
- Football West clubs generally do not have a retention plan for players, thus regularly seeing different players each year in clubs (based upon a PlayFootball participants analysis and a lack of strategy planning from clubs) – challenges such as these are currently being addresses with Football West programs such as *Game Changer*.
- Clubs tend to train once – twice a week, for an average of 1 – 1.5 hours each session.

Junior Girls League

- The League stretches from social to competitive, with a heavier aspect of social football in comparison to the Junior Boys League
- Participation numbers are growing steadily.
- Junior Girls tend to play their age group or two years up, this is primarily, based on data due to the lack of options in the Junior Girls League and not improve technical ability.
- Junior Girls who are seen to pursue a more competitive and challenging football journey join the Junior Boys League. Regularly at a lower Division to their age.
- Coaches are underqualified.
- Clubs tend to train once – twice a week, for an average of 1 – 1.5 hours each session.
- Trends, show Football West Junior Girls predominantly play at clubs where there is a welcoming social aspect (friends, good team etc.)

Review Point: the above will be more clearly identified as survey responses return and we have facilitated discussions at the forums.

Desired developmental Objectives for Community Juniors, for Football West to explore:

The below are points to be touched on or used as navigation during the course of the review to aid in reaching the outcomes mentioned above. Most of these have been addressed in the survey questions.

Developmental Objectives	Desired Criteria
Giving people a chance to play	
Number of weeks playing matches	
Number of weeks training	
Plan progressive difficulties through the competition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Playing format 	Grading system More competitive games Like v Like Participation v Competition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talent development is directly affected by the Competition and Regulations ▪ Youth to senior ▪ Grassroots to professional men's and women's 	
Domestic Competition and Club licensing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing National talent ▪ Competition games program through out each stage of the players pathway, maximise learning and experience. 	Competition pathways - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent ID • Talent Development – do they have the right environment to play football and be coached. Player pathways
Youth Football Competitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progressive and Competitive games program ▪ Age-appropriate growth and maturation 	
Talent Identification the process of an athlete moving into and/ or progressing up, the high-performance pathway	
Talent Development provide the most appropriate environment for athletes to accelerate their learning and performance	
Football West mixed experience for players, accessibility, touch points for players Education: Primary and Secondary school Informal Play: Playing in the local catchment area. Parents to the park to practice Grassroots: Playing for a junior club, Playing for a soccer school Joining a local club with mates Other Sports	

Transferable skills from other sports.	
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The current structure of the Football West Junior Competitions: **Regional**

- Regional Junior Football varies from area to area.
- There are not as many teams as there are in the metro community Junior Competition, therefore a similar process is not followed to placing teams in Divisions.
- Each Football West Regional Association is responsible for running their local Competition.
- Generally, teams are graded based on their age or school year – this is to encourage football participation in the area.
- Football West programs encourage uptake in Junior Competitions
- Football Events such as Country Week and Country Camp, provide regional footballers with opportunity to play against metro teams, explore football development options and allow coaches to scout for highly skilful players.

Review Point: To explore what challenges are being faced by regional associations and clubs.

The current structure of the Football West Junior Competitions: **NPL Juniors**

- The NPL Junior Competition runs separate to the Community Juniors Competition, with only 22 clubs apart of the Competition.
- Of the 22 NPL Junior Clubs, 11 are also NPL Senior Clubs and the remaining 11 range from State League to Amateur League Clubs. (A club is determined what it is based on the highest playing team, for example the club Joondalup City FC has NPL Juniors, however their First Team plays in State League, therefore Joondalup City is a State League club with NPL Juniors. Ellenbrook United's First Team plays in the Amateur League; however, the club has NPL Juniors, therefore Ellenbrook United is an Amateur Club with NPL Juniors.)
- A club is not deemed an NPL club, if they have NPL Juniors
- A club may have NPL Juniors and Community Juniors
- The purpose of NPL Juniors as mentioned in the 2017 NPL Junior Review has not been fulfilled to date by some NPL Junior clubs (as noted in Football West records pertaining to compliance, and as observed in the situations of each club in the past 3 years)
- The NPL Junior League is a mixed league, with the average number of > 8 female participants across all clubs taking part in the competition. This is based on review of the NPL Junior rosters of each club in the past two years.

Divisions	NPL Juniors Under 13
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	<p>NPL Juniors Under 14 NPL Juniors Under 15 NPL Juniors Under 16</p>
Competition Format	<p>27 matches are played in total each calendar year.</p> <p>The first 7 matches are known as the “Conference Phase”. Teams are placed in 1 of 3 ‘Conferences’, based on their ladder standing from the year previous. They verse each other and dependent on their results at the end of the 7 matches in the Conference Phase. Teams are placed into the allocated Division in the next phase.</p> <p>The next phase is known as the “Division Phase”. This is where teams are selected to be apart of the Division 1 or Division 2 and remain in this Division, versing other teams for 20 matches.</p>
Club Criteria	<p>Initially only NPL Senior clubs could have NPL Junior Teams. As a result of the 2017 review, the NPL Seniors and Junior Competition were decoupled (which was shown to be well received by all clubs aside clubs who gained an NPL promotion and wanted the status of their Junior to be rebranded. Further other member federations across Australia began decoupling their NPL Seniors and Juniors).</p> <p>The additional clubs following the decoupling of NPL Seniors and Juniors were self-nominated to be NPL Junior Clubs and approved by Football West.</p> <p>Since the occupancy of 22 teams, Football west has not accepted any other expressions of interest from clubs to enter their teams into the NPL Junior League. The reason for this is expressed in the column <i>problems</i>.</p>
Football West requirements from Clubs	<p>Football West hold NPL Junior Clubs to certain criteria that if not met, they risk receiving strict penalties.</p> <p>The current requirements for all NPL Junior Clubs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a minimum of 16 players in each NPL Junior Team (from Under 13s – Under 16s) ▪ Each team requires a coach with at least a C license. ▪ Each club requires an accredited Technical Director ▪ Submit a player roster for each Team to Football West, outlining details of the coaching staff and players (template attached as an example) ▪ Submit a Youth Development Program (template attached as an example)

	Football West review the player roster, coaching staff and youth development program.
Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Performance of NPL Junior Teams is poor – the Competition is not at the level it should be. ▪ The number of teams apart of the Competitions is believed to have diluted the league. ▪ NPL Junior clubs have fallen short on fulfilling the criteria requirements; clubs struggle with fielding teams, clubs struggle with having suitable accredited coaches. ▪ There are clubs placed better with coaches, players, and club operations that will perform better in this competition than some of the existing clubs however there is no method of replacing/removing and adding new clubs. ▪ Football West worries if they add more clubs, the competition will only become more diluted and completely lose its purpose as a high performing competition, and a league focused on the development of players.

Proposed Solutions for NPL Juniors:

- The below is a list of 4 different models to be explored during the course of the review, with the advantages/disadvantage and underlying criteria identify for each by Football West and further shaped by the public.
- The models are open to be tweaked at the Football West consultation meeting and are based upon discussions to date.
- The advantages and disadvantages are shortened and summarised points from previous discussions and not official recordings. The advantages and disadvantages of each model needs to be revisiting and noting.
- The approach Football West have identified as most suitable for the review will be a ‘market research’ approach, where each model is presented, and feedback sought.
- Visual of models can be created.

Model	Model Components	Advantages	Disadvantages
No Change	<p>Current 22 teams remain NPL Junior Teams</p> <p>Current compliance requirements</p>	The current competition format can remain.	<p>No further teams can enter the NPL Junior Competition</p> <p>Football West will have to dedicate enforcement of compliance or extensively support the 22 Teams to perform at the rate they are required to.</p>

<p>Remove NPL Junior Competition</p>	<p>Nil</p> <p>Community Juniors will be the primary and only available competition. Stronger teams (the replacement of NPL Juniors) will by default occupy the higher Divisions in each League.</p>	<p>It equalizes the competition opportunity for players who could not be apart of an NPL team/club but sought a high level of competition.</p> <p>It paves the pathway for potential promotion and relegation in the Junior Competition.</p>	<p>There is no longer a competition that focuses (/is meant to focus) on development of players.</p>
<p>Introduce a Licensing Criteria</p>	<p>Provide clubs with the ability to have the status of “NPL Junior” if they abide to a selection of criteria deemed by Football West.</p> <p>Clubs will be classified under a</p> <p>“Gold” “Silver” “Bronze”</p> <p>Category, which showcases to the football community the level of football and development that is being offered by the club.</p> <p>An example can be seen through this link: Football West Team Site - 2023 FQ Club Development - Info Pack.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)</p> <p>There are two identified methods to this model:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cap the number of teams and have a separate NPL Junior Competition run similar to the current NPL Junior Competition 	<p>The model creates a method to enter/leave the NPL Junior League.</p> <p>The model opens the opportunity for all clubs, granted they meet the criteria, to be a part of the NPL Junior Competition.</p> <p>The model has the potential to strengthen the NPL Junior Competition.</p>	<p>The model monetises Junior Football and can lead to clubs increasing their registration fees.</p> <p>Football West will have to spare resources and time to introduce and monitor the change.</p>

	2. Have teams play within the community juniors, at the higher divisions, and naturally allow the competition to separate itself.		
Reduce Teams	<p>Remove 11-12 current NPL Junior Teams, leaving 10-11 to remain.</p> <p>This model has the option to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Allow a method of promotion and relegation into the NPL Juniors 2) Leave the Competition at the remaining 10-11 teams permanently. 	The competition will be more concentrated and competitive.	<p>Does not solve the problem of a process to enter/leave the NPL Junior Competition.</p> <p>A fair method of teams entering/leaving will have to be explored.</p> <p>Football West will be faced with 11-12 upset clubs.</p>

Lastly, 5 key summary points identified from researching national and international Junior Competitions and Football Associations:

- ❖ The Junior Competition needs to be a like vs like competition – this promotes an individual’s football journey, and has to be fostered by the Competition Structure
- ❖ Coaches must have some level of skill or knowledge to be coaching a junior team, to understand the psychology and physical development needs of the age set they are coaching.
- ❖ Junior Football has to be a mixed experience of learning for players, ranging from the number of touches they get at training and matches to game time, skills and techniques.
- ❖ The environment has to be fostering for upcoming Junior players, and in the case of junior girls, has to be accommodating for the needs of female footballers. This is inclusive of club personnel (i.e. supportive club administrators) and facilities for both junior boys and girls.
- ❖ The standard of senior football is reflected in the pathways, development, accessibility and opportunity in Junior Football.

The WA Junior Strategy Development Project – Pre workshop preparation

Purpose - The WA Junior Strategy Development Project (Project) is designed to establish the framework for the development of all junior football in Western Australia for the next 5 years.

The following questions will provide you with the opportunity to think about the content of the workshop and organize your thoughts on what is asked.

Please use the attached “**Football West Development Framework**” as a reference to provide you with some context.

Simply write your notes in the space between the questions and bring them to the workshop.

What are the current strengths of the competition structure?

The involvement and commitment shown by so many local clubs towards growing juniors and girls competitions.

Grading and having similar levels of talent together and playing against each other.

That works quite well, however, I feel that the NPL competitions are possibly to diluted with clubs that are really not NPL standard or have the player to be able to compete in this level of competition.

The volunteers and decent people that help to run the clubs. This needs to be applauded, encouraged and rewarded. Our game has and will only exist with the passion and help by our volunteers.

What are the current weaknesses of the competition structure?

Season Length and number of competitive matches.

With regards to NPL and the 11 & 12s blue/green, the season is too short and the number of matches too few.

Players, boys, and girls from this development age up need more game time and meaningful matches. Starting in April and ending in September is not helping their development.

As a coach myself, a lot of our curriculum and studies, a good part of this covers skill acquisition and decision making, especially with the SAP age group and younger NPL players. This comes from playing matches. There are no shirt cuts to this.

What supports junior players in the current structure in the areas of development pathways and competition structure??

Grading for players

Grading and keeping talented players, as much as possible, together and playing together and against each other. That is a good starting point, but as mentioned, the comps at the talented level are too diluted, and this intern means you have weaker/smaller clubs without the coaching

resources/accredited coaches/educated coaches developing players that may have potential but developing in the wrong way.

Also, just as important to keep the less developed and social players happy and engaged and continue to play. A social player at 10, may still become a Socceroo or Matilda by 20.

There is plenty of evidence to support this over the years.

What is not supporting junior players in the current structure in the areas of development pathways and competition structure??

NPL structure

As mentioned above, the NPL competition in terms of talented players is too diluted.

Many clubs in NPL are not at that level, and ultimately that does not help the players.

The talented players do not get enough competitive games and tested, and the score blow outs and differential in skill level does not allow the players still learning or gaining skills to develop in a less stressful environment.

Perth Glory junior academies/teams

These should start at under 15s at least. Taking 11 -14 yo players away from their local clubs, again weakens the NPL completion, and does not necessarily develop the talented players any better.

Most NPL senior clubs have good junior NPL coaching and framework in place to develop these juniors.

Melville, Perth, Perth Redstar, Sorrento, etc.

Not enough accredited or educated coaches withing clubs.

More coach education is desperately needed. Even at NPL level and SAP level. You may have accredited coaches, but educated coaches is the problem. Many get an accreditation and then just do whatever they want. FW, together with education and educating the clubs and TD, needs to ensure the FW and FA directives and curriculum is filtering through.

Clubs that do not have the framework and coaching or that do not show a commitment to develop players and coaches, is to the detriment of young players development.

We have seen so many clubs, NPL level and blue and green level, with a complete disregard to developing players the correct way, asking to play the correct way, playing only for results, inexperienced coaches, or even experienced and accredited coaches, ego getting in the way.

Even simple things like doing a proper FIFA warm up, or the way players are spoken to and encouraged leaves a lot to be desired.

Club and Parents behavior

You just need to visit some matches on the weekends and listen to some of these teams and coaches and officials. Some of the behavior is truly deplorable.

That leads on to the respect for match officials/referees. This really needs to be addressed.

Even parent volunteers get abused by parents and coaches alike. No wonder it is proving more difficult to get kids and adults in to volunteering to become referees.

It would be great for FW to have "behavior officers" that can randomly visit clubs/matches on the weekend to inspect and issue warning when necessary. More important, to educate!

We preach about our kids playing to learn, enjoy the game and develop, keeping them in the game, this behavior is biggest enemy to this and really needs to be policed by FW and stamped out.

What changes could be considered to the current competition format?

More fixtures for juniors

It should be a priority of FW to arrange more fixtures. And a post season competition/tournament.

A solution could be spring/summer regional competitions, Football Victoria used to run a regional competition. A representative team made players selected from the top clubs in each age group and then play against North, South, Central, South West etc.

Matches could be played on grounds where clubs have all year-round access, and of course, the new SFC.

Start season earlier. Develop a post season competition for talented players.

Football West engagement and communication with clubs

Squadi was a good example, it is and will become a good tool for the competition, however, the implementation was rushed and then the main problem was the communication and the response in a timely manner back to the clubs, with regards to errors and changes to fixtures.

More workshops at local clubs to club officials, team managers, and technical directors.

Show support to clubs, educate them, measure them, if necessary police them.

FW needs officers, facilitators, representatives on the ground, active within the competitions and within clubs to take the game forward.

There needs to be some measurement/KPI mechanisms in place.

Private academies?

There seems to be more and more of these popping up.

What are the thoughts on this? Do they exist due to a vacuum left in our systems and structures?

Are they a money-making exercise or do they at least offer kids (that can afford it) an opportunity to play more and potentially get better coaching?

Is there commercial opportunities for FW to use this space to their own benefit?

To partner/outsource this with another international club/academy or organisation? To create it's own programs?

Why can't the NTC program be expanded or replicated for kids of different abilities, ages levels etc?

At a more affordable rate? Food for thought. There is a lot of money been made out there but companies that don't necessarily have the children's development at heart.

Notes from Football West Consultative Community and Club Workshops

24 May 2023 at Floreat Athena Football Club

Number of Participants – 4

Participants Notes

Current Competition Structure

Strengths

- Miniroos - Club can have as many teams as they want
- The grading of teams – this is important
- FAVA Program – teenagers in the club to learn to referee

Weaknesses

- Difficult jump between Miniroos and Junior competition
- Not enough places at some clubs in NPL for juniors
- Non NPL clubs – players leave – CLUB HOPPING
- Lack of U/17's competition
- NPL structure
- Clubs having trials on the same day

What supports player development?

- MiniRoos – well supported

Models

Model 2

- Pros
 - Good strengths
 - NPL status
- Cons
 - What stops top 12 clubs poaching quality players
 - Top heavy
 - Lack of variety of opponents
 - Can only have 1 team per competition

Promotion and relegations system could be an issue

Model 3

- Pros
 - Div 1 is established as the top or elite team
 - Clear and easily understood
 - Club autonomy
- Cons
 - Politics involved in getting rid of NPL status
 - Number of teams in each division could be an issue

Model 4

No notes

Facilitators Notes

- Only 1 Team per competition allowed.
- No Under 17s. Parents believe there are sufficient numbers and would then provide more opportunity for players not quite good enough to play Under 18's from Under 16's.
- There is pressure to trial to be offered an NPL spot. Trials are predominantly on the same dates.
- There is a big discrepancy in playing ability/skill within the competition age groups - between the top and bottom teams.
- Standard of coaching is variable at best.
- NPL can currently play up one year.
- State League Divisions have uneven teams – Div 1 = 11 teams, Div 2 = 10 teams
- Glory believed to be given preferential treatment – example given was a Glory team in one of the Junior NPL competition finishing fifth but being put into fourth place and the 4th placed team going to 5th for grading purposes.
- Talend development is run by FW but gets very monotonous after having been in the system for a while.
- There are approximately 12 private football academies operation in Perth/WA where players/parents pay for additional coaching.
- Miniroos supports players enjoyment of football to U12 level and then have to leave to play NPL if not in a Junior NPL Club.
- Coaching standard – C Licence is hard to get – 4-6 weeks and must have to coach at Junior NPL level. Cost is a barrier at \$1,000.
- B Licence cost is \$2,000.
- Club Fees vary from Club to Club based on various inclusions. Eg Referee payment, whether includes kit and clash kit, whether includes a C-licence coach.
- The 7 grading games last season in the Junio NPL was considered good.

- Model 2 above thought to be better than the current model however needed a promotion relegation system of some kind.

- Model 3 was good in that it promoted Club autonomy in being able to nominate teams to age groups. An issue to be addressed was how many teams could each club nominate to each age group (eg Subiaco has 6 x Under 16 boys teams).

- Allocation of teams to grades – it was thought that there should be some form of grading at the beginning of each season rather than a 2 up two down promotion relegation model, to take into account that the teams could be substantially different from season to season. 3 to 5 games was discussed as being the appropriate number of grading games at the beginning of each season.

- Preferred Model – Model 3 with a form of pre-season grading and some mandatory licensing criteria as per below.

- Licensing Criteria – the participants thought there should be some mandatory licensing criteria that supported player development for the top 3 divisions. Example criteria suggested was:
 - A technical Director
 - C Licence coaches
 - Minimum number of Junior teams

31 May 2023 at Armadale Football Club (1)

Number of Participants – 8

Participants Notes

Current Competition Structure

Current Strengths

- Multi-cultural
- Diversity at NPL clubs offering NPL and community.
- Inclusive.
- Aspiration – opportunity to play at an NPL Club.
- Opportunity for development.
-

Weaknesses

- Too much focus on 11 v 11 ideology
- Parents aren't educated in skill development
- Too many players on the pitch in current format – should be 5 v 5
- Grading at U/9 and 9's level kills skill development
- Kids aren't encouraged to keep the ball – always told to get rid of it
- NPL is too elitist – too expensive
- Parent coaches at NPL level.
- Game time – WA needs longer games.
- Players not developing due to positions.
- Linesmen not parents – bias.
- Lack of competitive game time.
- Lack of feedback to players.
- NPL is too diluted.
- No monitoring of fees throughout clubs.
- Pay privately for development.
- High paid technical directors with ego's as big as their pay packets.
- Lack of facilities from the clubs.
- Local government/expansion.
- Too many NPL clubs.
- Cherry picking/dumping kids.
- Referee quality – lack of.
- Poor coaching.
- NPL league structure.

Support Players

- B – license coaching (some clubs)

Not support players

- No freedom to express themselves
- Over coaching / misguided coaching
- Parental

- Np system or structure
- No help of methods to learn how to
- Clubs nominating teams before they are ready
- Physio's available to NPL club.
- Coaches with little playing background (good players make good coaches).
- Technical directors not corresponding with players/parents etc.
- Local players to local clubs.
- Bullying (coaches).
- Fear factor – silencing parents by punishing players.
- Football West liaising with clubs about who is brought in to run them – background – past history in junior football.
- Not enough development pathways.
- Players being identified to be contacted directly as clubs are not always reliable to pass on trial invitations.
- More attention given to elite to the detriment of community team.
- Not enough support in coaching level operations.
- More offering of courses (coaching).
- Clubs need to funnel coaches.
- Transparency of pathway.

Model 2

Pros

- Makes it easier for volunteers
- Higher level of comp
- Better competition.
- Elite junior's created.
- Not many.

Cons

- Still have points and trophies
- Selection process – depending on how it happens
- Politics in WA – who decides and how
- Selection process it will be based on senior's only.
- NPL – the wording will become a dirty word.
- We will lose elite junior's as there won't be enough NPL places.

Model 3

Pros

- Clubs choose what divisions they nominate teams into
- No need for the NPL
- Allowing community teams to be part of top divisions
- Great idea.
- No more club hopping.
- Kids will filter out to community clubs.
- Fairness in the competition.
- Transparency for players and parents.

- Good as long as there is 27+ games.

Cons

- Still diluted – still 20 teams
- How is it going to be selected – division 1 and division 2.
- Will division 1 and division 2 become the new NPL? How will this be prevented.
- Is there promotion/relegation – there has to be!

Model 4

Pros

- Number of games
- Clubs have the responsibility to nominate to divisions
- Club licensing is a good idea – brings quality
- This is the best model
- Need a grading system
- Clubs have control of their destiny
- More game time
- Number of games for development in division 1, 2 and 3.
-

Cons

- Back to what it is now.

Model 5 (preferred model from Group 1)

- Abolish high paid technical directors and encourage clubs to use technical directors wage funds to employ and pay experienced coaches (non-parents) as well as paying linesmen.
- Bring all kids back to their own age groups.
- Zone players to clubs.
- Monitor fees across clubs.
- Football West needs to liaise better with clubs and needs to fill a gap where there is nowhere for parents to complain and no power from Football West to do anything to make clubs follow their recommendations.
- Also background checks and monitoring of technical directors from past to ensure that they are suitable candidates to control juniors.

Preferred model from Group 2

- Abolish NPL.
- Implement model 3 with criteria, under 13's graded, under 14's promotion relegation.

General Comments on the butcher's paper

- Quality of vols in clubs actually understanding what development is
- "C" licence is too expensive and involves too many hours
- There is a real "commercial" imperative in the game and this can be restrictive
- Use of surveys is important
- The criteria are important
 - Club capacity and maturity is important

- Good club governance is very important in finance, committee duties and running meetings
- Need educated committees on governance and leadership
- Club development training
- Need basic clubrooms and toilets
- Need a standard operations manual
- Coaching quals are important
- Need an independent body to regulate
- Perth Glory will decide??
- Has to be grading at the start of the season
- Allocation – players to play in own age group – but do not hold players back
- Mandatory criteria
 - No parent/player coaching their own son/daughter at NPL level – this is a must
 - Cup round – refs need to be older than 21 years old in Junior Cups
 - Junior NPL – Paid linesmen who hold a certificate above 21 years

Questions regarding allocation of teams to divisions.

- Grading/under 13.
- Where you finish in the previous season and grading.
- Promotion/relegation (14+).
- Division 1 and 2 have to have C – license coach.

Question licensing criteria

- Division 1 and 2 have to have C – license coach.
- Changerooms.
- Ground marshals.
- Ground/pitch sizing must be enforced.
- Must have Football West referees at Division 1 and 2 games or the games are abandoned.

7 June 2023 at Subiaco Football Club

Number of Participants – 5

Participants Notes

Current Competition Structure

Current format

Strengths

- Wide range of ability levels catered for
- A lot of the time players play with kids of similar ability
- NPL gives some access to various things – coaching etc brings parents to the club

Weaknesses

- The geographic spread of the competition – too much travel
- Cost of playing in NPL clubs
- Sometimes players don't play with their friends

- NPL is not an even competition
- Parents want their child to play NPL so they change clubs a lot
- NPL is a closed shop
- Coaching courses not accessible due to timing, cost, time commitment
- Facility development is it is a criteria is out of clubs hands

Support players

- Talent ID is good
- Club centered approach for emerging elite
- Clubs struggle to do everything.

Not support players

- Playing rosters
- Fixed roles of who can play in various teams.
- Restrictive opportunities for players to play NPL.

Model 2

Pro's

- Quality of competition – stand out players – talent gathered together.
- No grading (after initial allocation of 12 clubs with potential promotion relegation).
- Status/criteria with centers of excellence.

Con's

- NPL = artificial construct
- Exclusive.
- No ability to break into the NPL – “closed shop”.

Model 3

Pro's

- Best teams against one another – provided there is promotion/relegation.
- Start to reduce player portability – stop players being shopped around.
- Downward pressure on fees (no longer a license to sell NPL status – it is now a product that can be sold).
- Increases chances of kids being able to play at the elite level at a reasonable cost.
- “Coach mobility”.
- Accessibility is improved and coaches may stay at a club if there is a chance to compete at the highest level.

Con's

- The challenge is the financial impact model 3 will have on some of the existing NPL clubs.

Model 4

Pro's

- Player development is 30 games.

Con's

- Access to facilities – mid-week or central venue games may need to be held.
- Volunteers for a 30 week season.

Junior Girls Comments

Currently parents starting to think about “NPL status”.

Lack of clarity from Football West with regard to competition structure.

No critical mass at the moment.

Currently lack of elite competition – possibly allocate good teams to higher divisions but play some teams more often.

Licensing

First year

- Financial transparency will be important.
- No coaching criteria – sorted out by promotion relegation.
- 2 x public forums.
- Club capacity building is important.
- Best practice models should be promoted.
- No licensing criteria unless set by Football Australia – this will reduce barriers to play.
- Grading should be a combination of both end of season finish and then pre-season grading.
- Finishing position and option to reallocate (approximately four weeks) by exception only.
- Year 2 promotion relegation – two up two down.
- Only one team per club per division.
- If a team is in the top division maybe third team goes up or just one team goes up.

Preferred Model

- Model 3 is the preferred model (if 30 games are required, play mid-week as an option).

General comments

- Girls NPL
 - Undecided from the recommendations of last review (2022)
 - Not sure where it’s headed or what’s happening.
 - Lack of elite comp.
 - Girls can play mixed up to u/18’s – few do.
 - Mixed teams take away quality from all girls’ comps (some people think)
 - Women’s coaching an issue.
 - Have the clubs got the capacity to cater from the impact of the women’s world cup?
- Allocation of teams to a division
 - Should be a combination of history from last season and grading.
 - Finishing position last year
 - Don’t have clubs nominate teams to divisions.
 - Need a safety net.
 - 2 up 2 down promotion and relegation
 - Clubs should only have 1 team per division

- Club development
 - Healthy clubs in terms of how they are run is very important.
 - They should all use F/W resources – they are good and plentiful.

28 June 2023 at Balcatta Football Club

Number of Participants – 14

Participants Notes

Current Competition Structure

Current format

Strengths

- Miniroos works well
- Transition to Squadi is a positive for the future
- High participation
- u/6's to u/12's working well
- Number of players increasing
- Coaches wanting to do better
- Committed club administrators
- Introduction of 2 tiers in junior NPL
- Different levels of competition – competitive and community
- More qualified coaches in the pool
- Only 2 divisions

Weaknesses

- NPL – too much dilution because of numbers of teams
- Lack of competitive games over a full 12 months
- Season should start earlier
- Having a concentration of elite kids in one team at Glory
- Lack of developmental structure
 - Coaching
 - Player levels
- Lack of quality referees
- Channeling revenue to admin
- Lack of governance
 - Make decisions on moving teams
 - Grading rounds mandatory
- Diluted NPL competition
- No community teams focus.....mostly on talent
- Not enough coaches at the right levels
- Volunteer apathy towards attending courses
- Cost of accreditation – clubs struggling to afford funding attendees
- Junior NPL is 13 to 16, should be 12 to 15's
- Parents coaching
- Not enough coaching resources in WA
- Too many clubs in the junior NPL – should be 2 leagues of 8 teams
- Clubs not rising to the required level of the NPL

- Too many sides in the NPL – weakens the comp
- Perth Glory juniors taking a large % of the talent
- Team Hopping
- Clubs not meeting teams in all NPL – there is not enough players
- Grading is not accurate due to player movement
- Structure can mean whole teams leave clubs – they just get lost

Support players

- The second phase of the junior NPL helps develop both divisions
- Playing teams of similar skill levels is good
- Miniroos competition is about right – consider blue and green divisions having an extra 4 games
- The lower divisions of Miniroos comp fit nicely into the school terms, other sports and availability of grounds which is good
- Local quality opportunities
- Quality coaches – development
- Quality of refereeing
- Club structure (quality)
- Appropriate equipment plus standard
- Development pathways allow kids with the 3 “D” (Desire, Discipline and Determination) to take the sport more seriously and standard pathways allow kids to play more socially
- Some councils approving infrastructure upgrades which is allowing clubs to improve and take on more players
- Good play – not just winning
- Volunteers and communities
- Local schools
- Small sided format works

Not support players.

- Pathway not clear
- Perth Glory is a closed shop
- Glory TD dictates who gets into State teams
- Club “hopping” by players. They are forced to shop around for a spot in a NPL team.
- NPL needs more games – possibly by FW running a district comp for 8 weeks
- Possibly consider a development comp for talented players during the off season
- Support around clubs (fitness / diet)
- What – value do you get for money
- Poor coaching- not directed
- Not structured coaching – no session plans
- Clubs location - geographically challenged.
- Volunteer run structure does not create income to enable coach development
- Governing body needs to help fund coaching courses
- Councils and government not allocating enough funds for sporting facilities
- Pathway not clear
- If a player is not in Glory – no pathway
- Cost of NPL
- Talented players have to move clubs to access top tiered

General comments

- There is an issue of referee abuse by players. Needs controlling
- Glory need to be removed from any competition u/18 down. Spread the players around close to their homes etc. Glory can support this by help in coaching etc.

Current Competition Structure

Model 2

Pro's

- Stronger NPL comp – teams more even
- Improved standard of community comp
- Exclusivity for 12 clubs – could have feeder clubs
- Quality assurance should be easier to manage
-

Con's

- Current NPL clubs would need to “restructure” – loss of status
- Puts in back to 2017 model – 12 = too few
- Reduction a good idea but 16 better
- Potential geographical issues – could all be North, metro

Model 3

Pro's

- Lose status name NPL
- Improve Community League
- Levels the playing field for all clubs
- Opportunity to move up
- Fair open process
- Criteria determines status (quality players, coaching, facilities)
- Localised and progression
- Cost controlled
- Junior transition and development consistency
- Loyalty to clubs – can keep players
- Best players play in the best leagues
- Keep participation in 13-18 age
- Grading preseason 13-17, 18's should be seniors

Con's

- Clubs don't have the prestige of NPL
- Loss of pathway to senior NPL
- Clubs need an NPL structure across all junior leagues and a program that kids can stay in
- Loss of revenue for the 22 NPL clubs in the short term
- \$ to FW less?

Model 4

Pro's

- None

Con's

- Unlikely to have 30 teams that would commit to a 30 game structure
- Non-availability of grounds
- Too hard on coaches and volunteers
- Not enough depth of players
- Works against clubs that have an NPL program and a sustainable development pathway
- Clubs would struggle to meet NPL criteria if only had one or two teams at the higher level
- Burn out of players

Alternatives Suggested

Junior District Comp

- Juniors to follow Senior NPL, State League and State League 2 levels (3 structures)
- Relegation and promotion

Currently lack of elite competition – possibly allocate good teams to higher divisions but play some teams more often.

Keep NPL

- Clubs promised assurances from FW that efforts would be rewarded re pathway
- Examine the data – number of players leaving community clubs, quality of games etc look at qualitative and quantitative data and elite structures
- Kids need a structure to be able to play at a higher level

Need to formalise grading so that anomalies are corrected early in the season and teams can be moved appropriately

Licensing

- Financial transparency will be important.
- No coaching criteria – sorted out by promotion relegation.
- 2 x public forums.
- Club capacity building is important.
- Best practice models should be promoted.
- No licensing criteria unless set by Football Australia – this will reduce barriers to play.
- Grading should be a combination of both end of season finish and then pre-season grading.
- Finishing position and option to reallocate (approximately four weeks) by exception only.
- Year 2 promotion relegation – two up two down.
- Suitable grounds, infrastructure and a sustainable structure
- Level of funds to sustain
- History of achievement, not a 1-2 season wonder
- No licensing would
 - Allow in “cowboys” with no structure and no chance of a sustainable pathway
 - Does not reward good governance

- Removes incentive for clubs to put in sustained effort to reach a consistent standard
- May result in players “club shopping” rather than feeling part of a program
- Licensing needs to be enforced
- Only one team per club per division.
- If a team is in the top division maybe third team goes up or just one team goes up.
- Mandatory
 - Facilities (changing rooms and floodlights)
 - Coaches – C licence preferred
 - Coaching Plan
 - Commitment to progress
- Have promotion - relegation

Preferred Model Group 1

- Model 3 is the preferred model (if 30 games are required, play mid-week as an option).

General comments

- Keep Current NPL Structure
 - Has allowed clubs to restructure with assurance their efforts will result in a sustained pathway for players
 - Review the data from previous years of NPL structure
 - Review issues prior to 2017 (12 teams) and now with 22 clubs – review pros and cons, talk to the clubs re challenges in NPL
 - Continue with the pathway – allows for development of kids – they need a structure to strive to play at a higher level.
- Allocation of teams to a division
 - Should be a combination of history from last season and grading.
 - Finishing position last year
 - Don't have clubs nominate teams to divisions.
 - Need a safety net.
 - 2 up 2 down promotion and relegation
 - Clubs should only have 1 team per division
- Club development
 - Healthy clubs in terms of how they are run is very important.
 - They should all use F/W resources – they are good and plentiful.

19 July 2023 at Armadale Football Club (2)

Number of Participants – 13

Participants Notes

Current Competition Structure

Current format

Strengths

- Hierarchy is known and understood – NPL/Juniors
- Gives players something to aspire to

- It's perceived that coaches and players are better in the NPL
- NLP – the number of games they play in the comp.
- There are enough games in the JL for the season
- Growth in the girls comp.
- The NPL system – girls, divisional teams, volunteers
- Global/inclusive
- Number of players.

Weaknesses

- Running and operation of the junior comp structure as it doesn't fall on a Sunday comp (not working)
- Separation between the NPL and juniors – other clubs locked out.
- Player opportunity is lost at the beginning of the season due to rejected players unable to find a suitable club.
- Variable quality is lost.
- NPL compliance to standards not checked.
- Not enough referees.
- Cost disparity between NPL and JL – eg, fees
- Too many teams in the NPL comp.
- No reward for non NPL clubs developing players.
- Lack of facilities
- Lack of competition for girls at different levels.
- Uneven comp Girls u/12 facilities and no divisions
- Resources – volunteers /coaches
- Funding
- Coaching quality – need a Tech Director – tools – skill set.
- 1 B license course a year not enough.
- Clarity and integration of coaching course between states
- Parents
- Length of comp. – needs to be longer.
- Game time – length too short.
- Access to facilities.
- Grading of teams.
- Enroll for registration.
- Travel time to games/training
- Cost of NPL/Miniroos
- No top-down money.
- Player transfer/allocation – cutoff date too early in season.
- Levels of coaching accreditation
- Quality – inconsistent referees
- Quality of grounds.

Support players

- Sometimes the parents
- Structure that is in place
- Coaches
- Parents
- Volunteers
- Relevant P.D. – cost to access.

Not support players.

- Not providing a player with rotation or player development
- Quality of coaches
- Sometimes the parents
- Parasite clubs/groups
- Lack of regulation

General comments

- Workshop well attended.
- A lot of good discussion.

Model 2

Pro's

- Elite player and coach concentration at the top
- Top 12 teams encouraged to foster junior pathways

Con's

- Player loss to perceived stronger club
- Exclusive
- No significant change to competition structure
- How do you work out who goes into the 12 clubs?
- Detrimental to club/player
- 12 teams not enough games
- Geography
- Lack of development

Model 3

Pro's

- Even playing field for all clubs
- Need to include promotion relegation as part of the structure
- Abolish NPL licensing fees – more affordable
- Greater player retention at clubs
- Only 22 games – allows early round cup games to all be played on Sundays

Con's

- North – South community football will be lost
- How are the top 10-12 teams selected

Model 4

Pro's

- Opportunity for each team to play in a more competitive game based on ability
- Rewards clubs that focus on player development
- Keeps players in teams/clubs

Con's

- No break in the season

- Too many games

Licensing

- C- licence or process of getting
- Facility standard – change rooms and referees change room
- Line marking for spectator control
- Compulsory ground marshals
- FW need to provide adequate referees for each season
- FW must ensure criteria is met and impose consequences for not meeting criteria
- Promotion/Relegation – one up, one down and a playoff second last v second
- Minimum coaching accreditation for level of year coaching
- WWC checks all coaches and managers
- Basic First Aider
- Social Skills training – ways to deal with children and parents
- Commitment to abide by standards
- Entry programs for all ages – published
- Criteria to be published by FW and clubs held accountable
- Issues
 - Don't control facilities – Councils do
 - Fairness and equity across all clubs – not to favour Perth Glory
 - No consequences for some clubs
 - FW must enforce the rules.
 -

General comments

- Zoning for Club Participation
- Lack of support from FW
- Concentration on promotion/relegation becomes the focus
- Must meet criteria and follow the rules – enforce equally across all clubs
- Q – are there other clubs that want to be part of the NPL?
- Grading – Player retention and development 12-16 = important
- Expand to 24 clubs in NPL and break into North and South then playoff between North and South OR NPL with 15 Clubs if player/game quality needs to improve
- Blended Model
 - Retain 22 Clubs
 - Support 13-16 years
 - Top 2 from North and South in each age group move up to NPL to make 24

2 August 2023 at Football West – Standing Committees

1. Number of Participants – 16

2. Participants Notes

Current Competition Structure

Current format

Strengths

- There is grading.
- Participation numbers
- Increase in female participation.
- Anyone can play.
- NPL – improved quality of coaching standards
- Cup
- Training / games
- Qualified coaches (lic. C minimum)
- 27 games
- 20 competitive at least should be.
- Top coaches and environment
- Community
- Attraction of best players to NPL
- Structure environment for development
- Accredited coaches
- Club infrastructure
- Framework provided to clubs.
- Quality training

Weaknesses

- Grading is imperfect.
- To many NPL junior teams
- Should junior NPL exist?
- NPL promotion and relegation not on merit
- System doesn't serve development of all.
- No NPL top 4 cup
- No miniroos grading for girls.
- Age groups for girl – revisit
- Regional WAFL – carnivals????
- Diluted – coaches /players.
- Not elite
- Development of weaker players
- Rewarding mediocrity by some players playing NPL.
- ATM/Easy for players to play local NPL.
- NPL not challenging – not elite Vs elite.
- Lax regulations for NPL clubs – not ensuring coaches are qualified/not checking in on structure/no real oversight.
- Disparity between clubs in NPL (NPL should be a mark of quality)
- Clubs not transparent with fees
- Cost of Fees – high barrier to entry
- Girls' open divisions
- High cost to register and play.
- Lack of development coaches.
- Travel and time commitments.
- Private coaching clinics.
- Dilution of player ability with too many NPL teams.
- Playing at elite level vs having elite level development.

Support players

- Clubs
- Academy
- Qualified coaches
- Comp structure
- Club committees/identity
- Administration (organization and facilitation of the league)
- Caching structure
- Train the trainer
- Infrastructure support
- Financial backing – coaching courses, coaches and infrastructure

Not support players.

- Squadi – through administrators.
- Under the DO's
- Costs – add on programs, club coaching, FW, Infrastructure
- Current system doesn't support state team or Glory.
- A League players
- PSA / School progs
- FW not enough \$\$ to support in house programs.
- Cost of coach education
- FA should invest in education.
- The role of FA and FW is to support coaches.
- Cost of fees (\$1000 per child)
- Field size and goal size (u/13's)
- PSA relationship – school sport and the knock-on effect.
- NPL women needs structure to mimic NPL men.
- Playing players that are too young in senior NPLW.
- Lack of coordination between different levels of football
- Consistency of coaching
- Facilities – lack of quality, pitches, lighting.
- Talent ID.

General comments – notes from group discussion

- Investment required in developing coaches by FA and FW – they are the most important development people. Without quality coaches' players will not develop fully.
- Key things for developing coaches:
 - Access to courses
 - Cost of courses
 - Access to grounds
- Need to attract and retain passionate quality people for the roles.
- Zoning in Metro area has its issues. If a north / south / east / west zoning structure, there would be zones that would be really strong and others that would be weak.
- Really need a merit based competition that encourages clubs to strive for excellence....if they want to do well don't put barriers in the way in the name of trying to ensure some equity in the results.
- Criteria for divisions should be minimal and things that clubs can control....facilities is one they can't. Probably only criteria should surround coaching quals.
- There could be some "tiers" of criteria – clubs could strive to meet these.

- Promotion and relegation should be in each level. NPL is a locked shop and not good for the game, especially the clubs that aren't NPL clubs.
- FW need to provide clubs with the knowhow to and for growing their participant base
- FW should provide guidance on using media to promote the game at the local level.

Model 2

Pro's

- Stronger players because less clubs
- Improves quality and development at top level
- Participation numbers support 12
- Less dilution
- Needs promotion relegation

Con's

- Player displacement – moving clubs
- No promotion - relegation?
- Ranking system not going to work – needs a re-look (Geography, facilities, coaching all teams U12-U16 boys and girls)
- Must include all regions – 10 would give a better comp – 27 games plus Cup games
- Could be a closed shop

Model 3

Pro's

- Last years performance determines where start in first year
- Removal of stigma associated with NPL name
- Simple to understand
- Includes all players
- Best will rise to the top on merit
- One group prefers this one
- Allows for rewarding clubs/teams
- Needs promotion relegation
- Allows teams to stay together longer (prevents “club hopping”)
-

Con's

- Freedom of movement
- Minimal criteria
- Club control

Model 4

Pro's

- Brings community clubs into it

Con's

- Dilutes

Alternatives Suggested

Regional Model – Commit to for 4 years but reassess if needed

- North/Central/Eastern/Southern (Regions)
- 2-4 NPL Clubs in each region (must have a semi-professional team and no teams in division 1 or lower) (Extra players reallocated to Community Clubs)
- 16-30 Community Clubs and Country Clubs in each region
- Change NPL Juniors to U12-U16 and potentially, these age groups play regional only

Licensing

- NPL1, NPL2, NPL3 – should have tiered criteria in each division, allowing for promotion relegation and movements up and down
- More coach development and long term development, access expertise and mentoring programs with pro-licensed coaches
- Must have a senior team (SLM or NPL) – full pathway – also must have a women's team, give this time
- Must have grass roots program 5-12
- Must have boys and girls
- Technical director or head of football – All of Club or gender specific debate
- Facilities – change rooms, quality pitch (don't need a fence)
- Geographical considerations
- Every kid should be able to drive 20-30 minutes to an NPL Club
- Not detrimental to female game, eg access to pitches

25 July 2023 (on-line) – Regional Workshop

1. Number of Participants – 3

Notes

In attendance:

Ian Rewell – President CCJSA

Vicki Glen – Administrator CCJSA

Kanella – Bunbury (Parent) Daughter was in CCJSA now NPL Women

Tanya – FW (Midwest)

John Karavitis FW (Goldfields)

Gareth Naven FW (Perth)

What are the current strengths of your competition structure?

Focus at CCJSA is on junior development U11 and below in particular.

Good numbers but no growth evident over the past few years.

What are the current weaknesses of your competition structure?

More broad consultation needed to speak with customers

Seniors to nominate to play in the League need to also have a reserve team which is restrictive

Senior Clubs come to Junior Clubs for players – especially in the women's. Some players get a taste of higher level and are reluctant to go back to juniors but still need to develop and may not be physically or emotionally mature enough to play against women. It dilutes the quality of the junior girls comp. Kanella suggested a survey as to why playing in seniors and not juniors.

Loss of Phoenix women's team is a real weakness

What supports your junior players in the areas of development pathways and competition structure both locally and within Football Wests operations?

Development Officer – all players and Junior Coaches – consistent strategy

Country week (6-8 weeks of trials 220 try out for 106 spots) – helps with development

Coaching qualifications – C-licence and opportunity to run a C-licence course

What is not supporting junior players in the areas of development pathways and competition structure both locally and within Football Wests operations?

Lack of promotion of programs available – better marketing required and help from FW

No NTC trials in Bunbury

Kanella

- Disconnect between CCJSA and FW – No overarching body for football in the South West (Q - what happened to the University lecturers report that doesn't appear to have gone anywhere)
- Travel to Perth exhausting and expensive – 2 x per week to provide opportunity for daughter to play at a higher level
- Possible partner sport with SWAS?
- Need to provide opportunity to stay local for longer

What changes could be considered to current competition format?

Player pathway required with linkages to Perth Metro Comp

A regional team selection and then play against other regional teams eg Albany, Kalgoorlie. Provides opportunity for players looking to compete at another level.

Pathways for boys and girls are not equitable – Lack of connection for girls through to A-League

Tanya to send questions to Presidents in Midwest to get input. Tanya happy with pathway provided from Midwest.

Issue in Women's NPL with the good players all congregating together in the one team leading to lopsided matches.