

WAFL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000 the WAFL in partnership with the WAFC, established a comprehensive review process for the WAFL competition, whereby every three years this peak community competition takes time to review where it is in today's sporting/football market place, then establishes the strategies that will provide the leadership conversations and debate to continually improve the WAFL competition.

These Future Direction reports began with the Fong Report 2000, followed by the Watterston Report 2003 and then the Rockman report 2006. Each of these reviews was headed by a competition football club President (apart from Dr Neale Fong, Chairman of WAFC), as a way of ensuring that these reports are ultimately owned by the clubs who make up the WAFL competition.

This club ownership factor cannot be underestimated as it has provided the energy for all clubs to address their competition's particular needs as it faces the challenges of the future.

It is therefore no surprise that through these Future Direction reports, the WAFL competition has made considerable progress in all areas of its business both on and off field. This year (2009) sees the competition having a 11.9% increase in attendances, TV ratings the highest for some time and media coverage substantially better than previous years. The competition has been the closest for many seasons with the quality of football being very good as demonstrated by this year's WAFL victory in the interstate game against the SANFL. We have also achieved the highest numbers of AFL draftees for years.

All of the above is the end result of the WAFL competition continually identifying new ways of addressing its challenges as it seeks to maintain its standing as a high quality state league competition.

The WAFL competition still remains as a primary source of entertainment and recreation for a large number of our State's population. While many of these are from the traditional WAFL club supporter base and are "ageing", there have been healthy signs of new generation WAFL club followers through the District model in which each Club plays a key leadership role. This new club follower requirement will only happen through the ongoing partnerships with each WAFL Club's district stakeholders in particular, the kids/youth of that area.

This Future Directions report builds upon the acclaimed three previous Future Direction papers by addressing the following key management issues:

1. Governance and Finance
2. Football (Centre of Excellence model)
3. Facilities
4. Marketing/PR and media

This report is focused on the aim of developing a robust and resilient WAFL competition comprised of strong, viable and sustainable clubs. It is imperative for this aim to be realized that each club becomes its district's Centre of Excellence, devoted to actively growing the game of Australian Football at all levels.

This report provides the ongoing frame work by which the WAFL competition can continue to work with all other stakeholders to ensure that the WAFL competition may be elevated to, and maintained as, our State's peak community football competition.