

# WAFL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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## 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.



# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FOR WAFL CLUBS

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## WAFL FUTURE DIRECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

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# 1. Corporate Governance

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Corporate Governance may be defined as “the set of processes, customs, policies, laws and institutions affecting the way in which a corporation (or club) is directed, administered or controlled.”

Inadequate corporate governance mechanisms or lack of adherence to its principles can lead to inadequate performance of businesses.

Most WAFL Clubs have experienced “mini economic meltdowns” over the past 25 years.

It is in the best interests of all stakeholders including members, supporters, players, the other clubs, the AFL clubs, the WAFC and the districts that all WAFL Clubs are well managed and adhere to sound corporate governance principles.

Elements of sound corporate governance include good business sense, objectivity, accountability and integrity.

To continue to evolve it is vital that the organisation and its separate entities continually evaluate their performance and seek ways of improving operations.



## **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

- 1.1 That WAFL Club Boards develop strict board governance guidelines in conjunction with the WAFC.
- 1.2 That each WAFL club Board has an identified Board member to oversee and Monitor the club's governance/culture.

## 2. Importance of Culture

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Most successful organisations have a vision and a clearly defined set of core values to ensure the achievement of this vision. This consists of the shared goals around which the team is built. Core values provide the organisation with its unity and focus.

Vision	→	Desired Future State
Values	→	What is Valued
Mission	→	Our Primary Role
Strategy	→	Choices of Action

It is imperative that all elements of the organisation (board, management, and personnel) are fully appraised of the core values and their implications.

They provide direction during the decision making process.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

- 2.1 That all WAFL clubs are able to demonstrate a clearly defined vision and core values.
- 2.2 That this club vision/values should align with the WAFC's.

## 3. Role of Board of Directors

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It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to develop the organisation's directional policy, endorse its strategy, appoint and monitor its senior executives and to ensure its accountability to its stakeholders. (Members)

Ideally the board needs a range of skills and understanding to deal with the various issues it may confront and to review and challenge management performance. It needs to be of sufficient numbers and have an appropriate level of commitment to fulfil its responsibilities. A Directors' Code of Ethics should be developed and this should be reviewed periodically.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

- 3.1 That all boards fully establish and understand a Directors' Code of Ethics as well as a list of board responsibilities.
- 3.2 That all club boards conduct an Induction process for all new board members which includes a sign off process.
- 3.3 That the board responsibilities be reviewed annually.

## 4. Role of the Chief Executive Officer

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As well as being committed to the organisation the CEO needs to work closely with the board to achieve its objectives.

The CEO should possess strong leadership qualities as well as sound managerial skills.

It should be the CEO's responsibilities to develop staff, their club loyalties and team work.

Ideally the CEO should have a strong football background together with empathy for the unique workings of a football club. Previous close connection with the club is an added advantage.

The club should ensure that the CEO possesses the corporate skills necessary for the position or has the will and the ability to acquire them quickly.

A commitment to continued self development would also be highly desirable.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

That the WAFL Club CEOs salary be built around incentives for managing their club in best practice.

### **RECOMMENDED CEO PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:**

1. Proven track record in management and leadership including:
  - Delegation
  - Decision Making
  - Organisation
  - Problem Solving
  - Time Management
  - Acting as a coach to staff
  - Acting as a mentor to staff
2. Financial Knowledge Including:
  - Experience in setting budgets, cash flows
  - Conducting budget review on a monthly basis
  - Ensuring cost centres are working effectively
3. Understanding of operation of Football Clubs Including:
  - Board roles and responsibilities
4. Strategic Planning Including:
  - Importance of Planning
  - Defining long range and Strategic Planning
  - A Strategic Planning Process

5. Co-ordinating Activities and Resources Including:
  - Employee and Group Performance Management
  - Policies and Procedures
  - Marketing and Promotions
  - Public and Media Relations
  - Ethics Management
  - Staff Development
  
6. Personal Traits
  - Confident
  - Enthusiastic
  - Street Smart
  - Wise
  - Passionate
  - Loyal

## 5. Financial Accountability/Sustainability

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The WAFL Future Directions report of 2006 had as one of its key goals that the Competition would be moving towards financially sustainable Clubs. A number of key recommendations were implemented and others were put aside for further investigation.

The events that engulfed the Peel Thunder FC in late 2008 as well as some Clubs continuing to struggle on a day to day basis indicate that much more work is required to achieve the goal of financially sustainable Clubs.

Club revenues and fundraising are, in most cases, at all time highs, yet, as is typical of any football Club, expenditure is generally keeping pace with increases in revenue and therefore Clubs are not becoming financially secure. This is not only an issue with WAFL Clubs – it is an issue for most levels of football.

### **PEEL THUNDER - THE LESSON LEARNT:**

The main lesson learned by the events of 2008 is that even in the face of poor cash flow and reduced revenues to budget, the Club continued to spend its expenditure budget regardless.

The processes to ensure this does not happen in the future have been established and can be replicated or reproduced at every WAFL Club. Most WAFL Clubs already have the processes established leaving only the key question of “how do we become financially sustainable” to be answered by the current Board on an ongoing basis.

The last Future Directions report included a sustainable model that could be used as a basis for all Clubs to follow, however a Club’s propensity to spend as opposed to save makes any model put up difficult to follow.

Each Club Board needs to view finance as equally as important as football. In other words, if a Club generated a bonus \$10,000 in revenue would that bonus be used as profit and saved or spent in a non revenue producing fashion e.g. increased football dept spend. From a finance point of view, the answer is obvious but, as stated before, the reality is that it is likely to be spent on improving the Club's chances of on field success.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.1:**

- 5.1.1 The Board of Directors must exercise their trustee responsibilities to ensure the quantity, quality and frequency of financial reporting.
- 5.1.2 A director with sound accounting knowledge should be responsible for monitoring accounts and should ensure that they are prepared in compliance with statutory and ethical obligations.
- 5.1.3 The accounting firm which provides the regular accounting service should be independent of the firm which conducts regular audits.

Most Clubs are now operating on similar chart of accounts with the goal of all expected to be achieved during 2009. The new Service Agreement conditions in place stipulate that monthly accounts must be provided to the WAFC which allows for an independent view of each Clubs accounts. To take this one step further, a fully central accounting service overseen by WAFC would enable independent assessment of monthly accounts direct to the Club Boards. Under this model, the responsibility of preparing budgets and making decisions would remain with the Club. The reporting of the monthly performance would be independent and if funded by the WAFC, would be a cost saving for all Clubs. Another benefit of central accounting is that real progress could be made in group or bulk purchasing on key expenditure lines at all Clubs.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.2:**

Investigate further whether a central or external accounting service for all clubs is the best model for the competition.

Draft fees have traditionally been a valuable source of income for clubs. However, the returns have traditionally been inconsistent from year to year with clubs experiencing either feast or famine. Clubs have sometimes been caught out by budgeting for higher income from draft fees than has eventuated. Smoothing out the payments by way of a base fee (majority) and incentive/reward fee (minority) will introduce another guaranteed revenue to WAFL Clubs.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.3:**

Investigate further the smoothing of annual draft fees so that no Club receives zero payment in any year regardless of the draft outcome.

Similar to the central accounting service, a central payroll service is the preparation and reporting of payroll payments to players and staff not the decision making function of who gets paid what. This would remain with the Club. An added bonus of this recommendation is that salary cap monitoring is improved and potential problem areas can be identified earlier in the year.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.4:**

Investigate further whether a central or external payroll service for all Clubs is the best model for the competition.

Increases in the Coaching and Management grant have not necessarily led to improved financial sustainability at all Clubs. An annual amount withheld or paid direct to a Club reserve account could assist those Clubs which struggle to set aside cash annually.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.5:**

Investigate further whether a forced saving option from the annual WAFC Grant is necessary to ensure annual sustainability.

The main area for increased expenditure is the football department. Clubs that have resources have a significant advantage to others in being able to deploy these to create better environments for players and coaches. Similar to the philosophy behind the player salary cap, a ceiling on football dept expenditure could assist until the financial sustainability question is ultimately resolved for the majority of Clubs.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.6:**

Investigate whether a ceiling on Football Department Spending is necessary to assist with Club sustainability in the short term.

One of the major sources of cash available to WAFL Clubs is the revenue from gate takings. From time to time salary cap accusations are levelled at Clubs. If WAFC personnel manned the gates and took responsibility for gate and cash control this would remove one of the potential cash sources which lead to these allegations.

It may also alleviate problems similar to those which occurred at Moss Street when an unexpectedly large crowd in excess of 10,000 turned up. Funds would be paid to the WAFL Club after the event.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.7:**

Investigate whether the WAFL controls the gate at WAFL games.

In 2009 the WAFL Director of Finance became a formal member of the Peel Football Club's Finance Committee. The appointment gave an independent person involvement in the questioning of Club finances and therefore elevates the role of Finance in the finance versus football debate. While the WAFL Director of Finance is the preferred option due to the knowledge of issues and concerns found at Clubs an independent person could also be considered.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.8:**

The WAFL Director of Finance becomes a formal member of each Club's Finance Committee.

## 6. Developing a High Performance Culture

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The quality of Corporate Governance is ultimately dependent upon the quality of personnel employed by the organisation. To capitalise on the benefits of good corporate governance WAFL Clubs need to recruit employees for solid values which align with the Club's core values as well as for their talent (attitude versus aptitude).

Clubs should also have an organisational structure that is integrated to effectively promote communication, collaboration and teamwork. A quality personnel development program is essential.

Recruit and develop WAFL staff as follows:

1. Recruit the best person for the organisation.
2. Induct them well.
3. Provide the necessary resources to do the job.
4. Have a clear staff development plan.
5. Recognise and reward achievements.
6. Empower staff.
7. Quick release if unsuitable.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

- 6.1 That all WAFL Clubs strive to achieve a High Performance culture.
- 6.2 That WAFL Clubs budget for all individual staff members to undertake ongoing personal development learning programs.
- 6.3 That the WAFL Club CEOs undertake responsibility for a staff learning plan including the online learning program.
- 6.4 That WAFL Club CEOs have this area as one of their key performance indicators.

## 7. Summary

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For the WAFL to achieve its desired levels of professionalism in all areas, it has to commit to adopt the following principles:

1. Corporate governance processes are incorporated in the business plan.
2. There is a clear statement of core values.
3. An enlightened board that is continually evolving.
4. A Chief Executive Officer with the leadership qualities and managerial skills to successfully lead the organisation.
5. A transparent accounting system which accurately reflects the organisation's financial position.
6. A group of valued employees committed to achieving the organisation's objectives.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7:**

- 7.1 That all WAFL Club boards build these above principles into their club management culture.



# FOOTBALL OPERATION & CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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# 1. District Centre of Excellence

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The Centre of Excellence is the foundation for the WAFL's future and a key to our push into the future. The aim is for all players coming through the WA development system to have the same development opportunities to maximise their potential.

This will produce:

- Higher quality WAFL players.
- Greater numbers of draftable players to the AFL.
- Higher quality of community level players
- Higher quality of educated parents for future generations

It is dependent upon:

- The availability of skilled staff at WAFL clubs to make their services available to assist in the development of players in their district.
- The availability of the WAFL club facility for the development of all district players.

All of the following recommendations stem from the District Centre of Excellence concept.

## **How do we grow this concept?**

### **1.1 Centre of Excellence**

The concept of WAFL Clubs as a "Centre of Excellence" for the District is the foundation of future growth and prosperity. It has been endorsed by the AFL, WAFC and all WAFL Boards. For the model to continue to grow there needs to be a close synergy between the WAFL Club and its District. WAFL Boards need to be continually appraised of developments within the District. Acceptance of the role of the WAFL Club by the District stakeholders is also paramount.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

- Each WAFL Club Board should be guided through the concept with an opportunity to ask questions and comment on ways to improve the concept.
- Each District Chair be included as an ex officio member of their WAFL Club Board.

### **1.2 Administration**

1.2.1 The Football Manager has to develop a more strategic role within the organization and be responsible for the Football side of the club.

1.2.2 The Football Manager has to take a managerial role with the PDO and the regional staff to oversee the WAFL club football pathway.

- 1.2.3 The Football manager has to develop a strong co-operative relationship with the District Manager to jointly develop the facility and to maximize the opportunity for district use of the facility.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

That the role of the Football Manager be developed into a more strategic and managerial position within the club.

**1.3 Sharing Knowledge**

What can WAFL Clubs do to make better use of their knowledge base for their district stakeholders?

District Manager/Football Manager. These staff must meet to discuss how and when the club knowledge can be shared within the district.

- Coaching: Determine the strategic use of coaches within the district. This may mean increasing the contractual obligation of coaches/staff at the club towards the district.
- Administration: An action plan and timeline for the use of administrators to teach district administrators.
- Trainers: The WAFTA has initiated a plan of action for each club to hold a trainers course each year for district trainers. Plan for the use of expertise for the treatment of district injuries in the club facilities.
- Umpires: An action plan and timeline for the use of coaches to assist in umpire development and training.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.1**

That the District Manager/Football Manager, through the WAFL Board and the DFDC, develop a timeline for the conduct of development courses for each of the following:

- Coaching
- Administration
- Injury treatment
- Umpiring

**1.4 Sharing Facility**

What can WAFL clubs do to make better use of their facility for their district? stakeholders?

**RECOMMENDATION 3.2:**

That the WAFL Clubs together with the DFDC investigate ways in which the WAFL Club's facilities may be better utilised within the District.

## 2. Coaching

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### 2.1 Professional Development

If the WAFL coaches are our best coaches what training should we offer them to assist them to develop their abilities?

2.1.1 Special WAFL coaching sessions available only to WAFL coaches?

- Annual session with John Worsfold or Mark Harvey run by the respective AFL club?

2.1.2 Level 3 courses here in WA for our coaches and include WAFL coaches.

2.1.3 University students to spend time at WAFL clubs developing and teaching the use of video editing and stats analysis. This would be coordinated by the WAFC.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4.1:**

That specific football development courses for WAFL coaches be developed in conjunction with our States AFL Clubs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4.2:**

That WAFL coaches have the opportunity to complete level 3 coaching accreditation annually in WA.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4.3:**

That WAFL Football departments use university students with the specific skills to assist in the delivery of the football program.

### 2.2 Match Day Coaching Facilities

As technology has improved and the numbers involved in coaching on match day increase what are the changes required from a facility point of view? The Football Managers and coaches themselves are the best placed to determine what these facilities should be into the future. The integration of game day statistics and vision is a key ingredient for future player development.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7:**

That a subcommittee of Football Managers and coaching staff develop a plan of minimum requirements for a Match Day coaching facility for the future.

## 2.3 Coaching Technology

What technology is the minimum for coaches on match day and for player feedback post game?

### 2.3.1

- **Vision.** A feed from the cameraman direct to each coaches box? Clubs could then obtain a live copy for use during the game if required.
- Should we move to a second camera for behind the goal vision?
- **Statistics.** Stats going to a live website will enable not only coach access at the game but also public/media access. Coaches then need the ability to manipulate these data into meaningful (for them) forms.
- Include interchange data on the website for player game time for the coaches' use.

### 2.3.2 The same group should also look at Player Feedback

- All Clubs to develop substantial post game player feedback systems within each club.
- This could be extended to password protected sites where players could have information posted.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8:**

That a subcommittee of Football Managers and coaching staff develop a plan of minimum requirements for coaches to use match day statistics and vision to provide players with effective post game feedback on their performance.

## 2.4 Full Time Player Development Officers

There has been widespread praise of the Player Development Officer (PDO) and the impact of this position at each club. As well as the obvious benefits that this position provides it also assists the Football Manager to better run the football operations of the Club.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9:**

That the role of the PDO be endorsed as a full time position for all WAFL Clubs

## 2.5 Full Time League Coach

Some Clubs also have the benefit of a full time League Coach. Given the finite resources of all WAFL Clubs and the undoubted value of high profile coaches it is imperative that they be fully utilised in areas as well as team performance. These may include input into the Club District and contribution to Club marketing, sponsorship and promotion.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10:**

That as part of their contract full time coaches should be assessed on their overall contribution to the activities of their Club.

## 3 Competition

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### 3.1 Draft Age

The WAFL will continue to push for an increase in the AFL draft age to the year a player turns 19. This will provide the AFL with a more mature player better equipped to step into the National competition and also provide the AFL clubs a little more certainty in selection.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11:**

That the WAFL recommend to the AFL that the AFL draft age be increased to the year a player turns 19 years of age.

### 3.2 Competition Equalisation.

The past two Future Direction reports have included a major section on competition equalisation. They produced a number of initiatives aimed at maintaining an even competition. The latest initiative was the points system for recruiting that was introduced as a part of the revamped salary cap and this combined with allocating the AFL players from interstate to the bottom 5 clubs and fixturing so that the bottom clubs play each other three times in a year (where possible), has led to a close competition in 2009. While competition equalisation is seen as beneficial to all it was decided that the current initiatives need a little time to test their effectiveness. For this reason there are no further recommendations in this paper with respect to competition equalisation.

### 3.3 Reserves Competition

It was determined by the committee that the reserves competition had a valuable place as a part of the development structure provided the players in the competition were legitimate potential league players.

The reserves competition should consist of primarily young players on the way up but also have places for experienced players who form a vital part of the league group.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12:**

That the reserves competition remain as a part of the WAFL structure.

### 3.4 Colts' Competition – Maximum Age

By reducing the maximum age of colts players this will mean that Clubs will need to push young players into the reserves thereby aiding their development.

This may inhibit the development of some players, especially tall. This needs to be considered as part of this change.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13.1:**

That the colts competition maximum age be reduced to the year a player turns 18.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13.2:**

That the WAFL should also investigate, as part of this change, a mechanism for tall developing players to play in the colts beyond the maximum age if circumstances suggest that this would be better for players development.

### 3.5 Colts Squads

The underlying principal of District boundaries is that WAFL clubs have exclusive access to all players less than 19 years of age. This should not change but in assisting players to fulfil their dreams at a WAFL club transfers should be encouraged if a player does not make the colts squad at his zoned WAFL club. For this reason it is suggested that there be a limited number of players on the clubs colts squad list. If players are not on this list and at the upper end of the colts age then they should be able to transfer to another club without refusal.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14:**

That the WAFL investigate the implementation of a list of 18/19 year olds for each Club.

### 3.6 WAFL Colts – Second Team

Should WAFL clubs have a second short term colts' competition involved in the pre-season and first few rounds (up to the start of the WAAFL games) to give more boys an opportunity at WAFL level? Many WAFL clubs have big numbers of colts' age players trying out in the pre-season. This second team and the games provided not only give these players a game in the period prior to community football starting but also provides opportunity for greater scrutiny for WAFL clubs who may have to allow some players to transfer to other clubs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15:**

That WAFL Clubs field two colts teams during practice games and the in-season games prior to community football commencing.

### 3.7 Country Sports Enrichment Scheme

All agree that these games are good for football on all levels. They are endorsed by the Department for Sport and Recreation and also by the WACFL whose leagues host these games. It is important that all of these games maintain a high standard of presentation and that while WAFL clubs understand that they have a role in their zone investment the cost to the local leagues and to the WAFL need to be kept to a minimum.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16:**

##### **For all WAFL CSES games**

- Games are selected on the basis of neighbouring zone rather than on gate optimization.
- Games to be played in school terms to maximize U16 attendance.
- The preceding week the home clubs visit every school and junior club with incentives to attend the game.
- That adequate funding is obtained to ensure that the cost to the local WACFL's and the WAFL clubs is kept to a minimum.

## 4 Game Attendees

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It is clear game attendee's and club membership are vital for a WAFL clubs existence. This is a key financial driver of the club through gate, bar and catering, sponsorship, merchandise and fundraising. All clubs must ensure good facilities for game attendees with maximum opportunity for these attendees to spend at the club.

- 4.1 Club Members: Considering membership fees, ground admittance fees and members facilities, what can be offered to members to make it more valuable?

- 4.2 Visiting Club Members: As above should these people get something at other clubs eg special seating, undercover seating?
- 4.3 Non Members: What should all clubs provide as a minimum to any WAFL attendee to ensure that the day at WAFL football is a good one?
- 4.4 What opportunities to spend are offered to these attendees?

**RECOMMENDATION 17:**

**That the WAFL investigate for each WAFL facility**

- 17.1 A plan to provide a determined number of designated undercover seats with bar and catering facilities for members.
- 17.2 A plan for all WAFL clubs to provide a determined number of designated undercover seats for opposition members.
- 17.3 A way for all clubs to budget for some spends on facilities in conjunction with the local council. Perhaps a % of gate should be set into a facilities fund for each club.

**4.5 Facilities for Media, Coaches etc.**

The media carries the WAFL message to the masses and has been particularly effective in promoting the game in recent years.

Visiting coaches, stats groups and umpires' coaches also need to be adequately accommodated.

Facilities should be clean, with adequate power, protected from the public and with easy access.

Ideally these facilities should be placed high and central to the game and be of equal level of appointment.

**RECOMMENDATION 18:**

That every WAFL Club adequately caters for visiting media, coaches, statisticians and umpires' coaches.

## 5 Umpiring

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The WAFL accepts its responsibility to provide the best training and coaching for the WAFL umpires. There have been a number of significant improvements in umpire development over the past few years. Just as WAFL Clubs seek to improve each year then so must we seek to improve the standard of umpiring.

## **5.1 Coaching**

Given the level of assistance provided to WAFL coaches what can be provided to umpires' coaches to ensure the best possible instruction is available?

## **5.2 Umpires**

A culture map undertaken with the umpires to determine their perspective of where they stand and any perceived deficiencies.

## **5.3 WANFLUA**

The Umpires' Association to be consulted regarding their perception of umpiring standards and facilities.

## **5.4 Training Facilities**

A review of umpires' training facilities to determine if they adequately compare with those at WAFL Clubs.

## **5.5 Coaching Facilities**

Facilities available to umpires' coaches to compare with those available to WAFL coaches.

## **5.6 Dressing Rooms**

Given the increase in numbers of umpires and mixed genders are current WAFL facilities adequate?

### **RECOMMENDATION 19:**

That the WAFL conducts a review of all aspects of umpiring.



# FACILITIES & THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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## WAFL FUTURE DIRECTIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

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2. Immediate and Continued Facility Improvements
3. Ongoing Maintenance and Repairs

## 1. Redevelopment Program

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It has long been recognized that many of the traditional WAFL Club facilities are aging, poorly maintained and inadequate to meet continuing demands of the pre-eminent State football league. There has been a range of contributing circumstances but it has now reached a point where, for the sustainability of the Clubs and the place of WAFL in the future of WA football, they all need to reach certain minimum standards. The impact of poor facilities affects not only players and coaching staff and on field performance, but importantly the quality, condition and type of public facilities impacts significantly on the off field financial health of the Club. The standard and scope of facilities limits potential sponsorship support and affects the involvement of the broader public in a range of supporting roles and as spectators.

The state of the WAFL facilities was documented following the 2006 WAFL Future Directions report and recommendations. A subsequent level of assistance and improvement was made possible by granting modest levels of support through the WAFC Community Development Facility Fund. A range of improvements was made and individual Club strategies were initiated and are at different stages of development. To move to the next level it is now appropriate to seek State Government support for a more substantial injection of funds to enable the aspiration of WAFL Clubs to effectively function as their District Football Centres of Excellence.

To that end the WAFC has prepared a submission to the State Government advocating the establishment of a program to redevelop WAFL grounds and support improved regional football facilities. The submission proposes a partnership with the Department of Sport and Recreation to manage implementation of a program for the allocation of funds for upgrading or rebuilding of facilities.

Notably the WAFC is also committed to working closely with the relevant Local Authorities on the various redevelopment projects to ensure that they happen.

The submission is made on the basis that all grounds currently operating should be retained and that no further sharing of WAFL grounds is envisaged at this stage. It is recognized that different venues have different needs and that priorities will need to be set and agreed upon. A number of the venues need to be completely redeveloped as soon as practical (Peel and Claremont), some require more detailed feasibility and planning (East Fremantle, Swan Districts and West Perth), while for others specific improvements are needed (East Perth, Subiaco, Perth and South Fremantle).

In redeveloping the facilities to meet modern requirements and expectations the new facilities scope and design are to be based on the preferred facility standards for WAFL venues as detailed in the WAFC Facility Strategic Plan. This shall be used as a guide for the minimum requirements.

The submission proposes that the State Government commit to a program now with an expectation that the State will receive funding in due course through the redevelopment of identified surplus land surrounding WAFL grounds.

Given that the land has been occupied and used by football for many decades it is proposed that the State work with the WAFC and the Clubs in a systematic way to redevelop the sites. This can form an infrastructure program administered through the Department of Sport and Recreation to fund upgrades or build new facilities more attuned to modern sporting and recreational needs at those venues.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:**

That the WAFL Clubs endorse and strongly support the initiative of the WAFC to promote to the State Government that a new program be established to fund redevelopment of WAFL grounds.

## 2. Immediate and Continued Facility Improvements

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The WAFC has given financial support to the WAFL Clubs since 2007 to upgrade essential aspects of their clubs to move towards meeting centre of excellence standards. That money has been used to support a range of improvements for players (for example gymnasiums, IT equipment, lights and changerooms), umpires (changers), coaches (coaching boxes), visiting teams (changers) and the general public (seating, painting and sound system).

Whilst these improvements have made a difference and have been very welcomed and appreciated, much work remains to be done in the short term. It is likely that the success and implementation of a redevelopment program is for a number of Clubs a long term objective. In the interim maintenance and capital improvements continue to be a priority.

The need for such work to remain as a priority, particularly in the spectator and public areas, stems from the need for the WAFL Clubs to provide venues and facilities that are 'customer friendly'. It is accepted that no longer can the support of the general public be taken for granted and the challenge is for Clubs to seriously commit to meet changing expectations.

The continued growth of the game is related to its entertainment value both on and off the ground. The quality of the surrounds, the standard of seating, the price and range of food and beverages, access to protection from the elements and the cleanliness of the public amenities are also important components in attracting and retaining spectators and potential members.

The support in improving the public facilities that has been given by the WAFC to the WAFL Clubs in recent years is still considered vital and needs to be continued by the WAFC.

Additionally it is anticipated that a number of the redevelopments will require feasibilities and planning to be undertaken. It will be expected that the Clubs and the WAFC will contribute to those and this is desirable in attempting to maximize the return to football.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

That the WAFC continue to resource the Community Development Facility Fund to enable WAFL Clubs to continue to improve and redevelop facilities to fulfil their function as District Football Centres of Excellence.

### 3. Ongoing Maintenance and Repairs

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The role and value of facilities in generating revenue, attracting sponsors and crowds and assisting growth in participation is critical. The need to keep them at standards that meet modern expectations and satisfy statutory requirements is essential to continue to have the game grow at WAFL level. In the past the public areas of the WAFL grounds in particular have received minimal attention and this needs to be addressed.

Current arrangements for maintenance of the facilities varies according to the different lease arrangements and the amount chosen and able to be expended by the Clubs. It is suggested that Clubs must give focus to attending to the needs of the paying public and present their facilities at suitable standards. To that end it is important that all Clubs commit portion of their own revenue and expenditure on facility improvement and maintenance and these should be documented.

To continue that focus it is suggested that each Club, if not already in place, should appoint a Director of Facilities in order that these off field services are given sufficient attention. That Director in fulfilling that role should over time ensure that an asset register of the Club's facilities is in place. That register may include a description of each asset, a condition assessment, an estimate of remaining useful life and a program of maintenance to ensure that provision is allowed on an annual basis for replacement and upkeep.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

That all Clubs appoint a Director of Facilities

That Clubs target and budget for 10% of total expenditure to be allocated to facility



# MARKETING, PR, MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

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## WAFL FUTURE DIRECTIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Integrated Marketing/Selling for WAFL Clubs.
2. Media
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Below are a few ideas we believe will pull the competition closer together and allow major companies to align with it. We believe the WAFL competition could easily attract the largest following for any competition in the State and as such we need to look ahead to see what we need to do to facilitate this growth.

## 1. Integrated Marketing/Selling for WAFL Clubs

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One of the major issues in the future is the fragmentation of WAFL football. While the WAFL competition should always be competitive on the field and played this way, we believe that the boardroom and offices of all clubs must join forces, creating opportunities for major partners to align themselves with the competition and districts.

If we keep going down the line of yesteryear nothing will change. A fragmented business is too hard to work with or to align to. We believe the clubs need to keep a strong focus on football as a product. This allows external partners to easily work with our competition and districts. There are a number of areas where the competition needs to work together to obtain funding or cost savings. This will help the competition brand overall and help business and community understand why they should support us.

**Suggested areas we need to work as one business on:**

- e) Alcohol
- f) Beverages/ Soft Drink
- g) Food
- h) Cars (Join our Fleet)
- i) Broadcaster
- j) Radio
- k) Insurance including public liability.
- l) Districts
- m) IT/Communication solution
- n) Centre of Excellence
- o) Little League
- p) Energy (Gas ,Electricity Etc)

- a) Betting
- b) Football Warehouse
- c) First Aid
- d) Banking

Should we consider collaboration with our AFL clubs (Eagles and Dockers)? This would allow an all in football approach and again would give the WAFL greater strength when working with partners. WAFL clubs may only be able to do this in some areas (alcohol, soft drink, cars, energy etc) but it still should be explored. (Appendix A)



Through this collaborative approach the WAFL can benefit in a number of ways:

- a) Reduce costs to product adding to a better bottom line.
- b) Allows product to extend further into the community.
- c) Allows WAFL to work on getting new partners and grow its business.
- d) Create opportunity for new revenue streams.
- e) Allow clubs to maintain local sponsors so there is no conflict with Competition sponsors
- f) Attract new competition sponsors - eg broadcast sponsor, alcohol, soft drink and food etc eg: Selling of the competition naming rights, broadcast partner, alcohol product, and soft drink product, which allows the clubs to maintain their own sponsors similar to AFL.

**RECOMMENDATIONS 1:**

- 1.1 That the WAFL clubs fully endorse and support a collaborative, integrated marketing and selling strategy.
- 1.2 That all WAFL clubs have marketing expertise on their Boards (i.e. Board Member).
- 1.3 That all WAFL clubs have a staff member responsible for marketing and selling.
- 1.4 That WAFL Clubs develop an agreed panel of assets which can be sold off in sponsorship at an agreed value.

## 2. Media

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Promoting the WAFL competition through the media is crucial for the future prosperity of the league. Dedicated media liaison staff to build strong media relationships ultimately leads to a greater promotion of the WAFL, which in turn generates larger attendance figures at games and boosts membership numbers at clubs. All of the above creates a more professional competition, which also attracts sponsors and supporters and opens new revenue streams. By addressing media requirements for the future we are investing in the long-term prosperity of the game.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS 2:**

That WAFL Clubs consider the adoption of each of the following:

- 2.1 **Media officer:** Appoint a dedicated media officer for the WAFL to be housed at the WAFC and overseen by the Media and Communications Manager (WAFC)
- 2.2 **New channels:** Create and enhance new communication channels such as e-newsletters, online video / WA Football TV.
- 2.3 **Website:** Increase the quality and quantity of the web-site and associated stories, articles and photos to generate more online traffic. Also we need to agree on a basic commonality of rate charged to advertise.
- 2.4 **Facilities:** Improve media facilities at WAFL grounds and equip them with new information technology, eg: direct stats feed, wireless internet, ISDN lines etc
- 2.5 **Club liaison:** Each WAFL club to appoint a media liaison person for home games to welcome media and assist with gathering statistics and other information.
- 2.6 **E-news:** Increase the scope of the monthly e-newsletter to reach 100,000 subscribers
- 2.7 **Football Budget:** Take more control over content and publishing of the Football Budget. Eg: Own our magazine, do not contract it out.
- 2.8 **Education:** Educate media more about the role of the WAFC in the WAFL

### 3. Technology

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WAFL Clubs in the future will need to fully engage with technology. This is an area of our business that has not always been fully utilised. Better use of current and future technology will create greater opportunities for the competition and clubs alike. This will enable WAFL clubs to communicate better to customers, reach new markets, relate to the up and coming younger generation who will be the future of football and create ongoing, long-lasting revenue streams.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

- 3.1 That WAFL Clubs investigate ways in which technology can be better utilized to communicate with their clients. (Appendix B)
- 3.2 That a timeline be developed for the implementation of new technology initiatives. (Appendix C)

### 4. Subiaco Oval – Future Development

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When the upgrade of Subiaco Oval finally comes to fruition, we believe the WAFC/WAFL should work on securing seats with corporate hospitality for all WAFL clubs. This could then become an ongoing revenue stream for all clubs and be managed by a neutral management company for a fee.

All WAFL clubs should also be allocated their own Associates box to manage themselves as another reliable revenue stream or facility to entertain its major and potential clients.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

- 4.1 That WAFL Clubs initiate discussion with the WAFC for the allocation of facilities, including Associates boxes, when the new or upgraded stadium is completed.
- 4.2 That a suitable management structure is developed for the future use of Subiaco Oval facilities.

# APPENDIX A

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The chart below shows the Partners the AFL comp has aligned with.



## APPENDIX B

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### 3. Technology – Areas to consider:

- a) **Football Online Shop:** WAFC/WAFL to look at an online shop facility for all clubs to purchase products and equipment. This will have a revenue stream to help with funding of district programs.
- b) **WAFC/WAFL Club and District SMS Facility:** WAFC/WAFL to explore SMS messaging system for all district clubs to utilise for information flow. Also explore the revenue stream that sits with this technology.
- c) **Bluetooth Facilities at all venues:** WAFL clubs to look at Bluetooth capabilities at their venues. This would allow another avenue to communicate with spectators and members. This would also be used as a new revenue stream to the clubs (advertising etc).
- d) **Business Blog:** Blogs are a great way to share news and information quickly and easily without the need for clogging up already cluttered inboxes. A business blog can be used for updates on the latest issues facing the business or if somebody has found an interesting website or video so they post a blog about their find, or simply, it's someone's birthday and you want to let everyone know.
- e) **Centralized Club Database:** This would allow a broader reach of football to the whole State. It would also give WAFL a stronger presence in the community.
- f) **Training:** Full training of all appropriate staff in technology, this needs to be considered internally by WAFC and have an ongoing plan.
- g) **Business Wiki:** The WAFC/WAFL could use a Wiki internally to publish manuals, policies and staff manuals for quick referencing through the Wiki search system. Definitions of commonly used abbreviations and other football terms to assist people in understanding business terminology.
- h) **Phone Technology:** All clubs should look into a standard carrier for cost savings and other benefits. Also all clubs should have the ability to contact direct and transfer between. This then opens the door for conferencing and business meetings between clubs without meeting face to face.
- i) **Mobile Phone Technology:** Again all clubs should consider a common carrier as this will reduce costs and opens a number of revenue opportunities. (SMS, Downloads, Advertising, GPS Directions etc)

- j) **Online Conferencing:** There are a number of free web conferencing services where you can share your desktop, show slides, collaborate, chat, talk and broadcast via webcam with absolutely no download required for attendees. Some of the benefits are video conferencing / desktop sharing / online whiteboard plus many more features. Clubs can communicate with country staff and stakeholders easily with no extra costs involved.
- k) **Micro Blogging (Face Book, Twitter):** All clubs to monitor this form of marketing. These are very powerful marketing tools but can move very quickly to new mediums. An all in football approach will enable us to keep up with this technology.
- l) **Web Based Income:** This is a great opportunity for all clubs going forward. Income for the web should become a day to day part of business for all clubs and the WAFC/WAFL must work together to maximize this area of the business.
- m) **Photo Gallery:** Purchase/order facilities for game, club and player photos.
- n) **IT Infrastructure:** All WAFL clubs should be looking at a shared IT setup which is centrally hosted at a data centre to reduce club operating costs and add to security of data/emails and backups etc.
- o) **IT:** All WAFL clubs to have grounds set up with adequate IT connections from stats teams to coaches' box and internet connectivity to both. (This coincides with point 4 of the media recommendations Facilities.)

## APPENDIX C

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### TIMELINE

RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE	COST
<b>Web Based Income</b>	End of 2009	Nil
<b>WAFC/WAFL Club and District SMS Facility</b>	All venues set up by start of 2010 season. Depending on costs, cost analysis to commence end of 2009 season.	Waiting costs analysis from overview.
<b>Bluetooth Facilities at all Venues</b>	All venues set up by start of 2010 season. Depending on costs, cost analysis to commence end of 2009 season.	Waiting costs analysis from overview.
<b>Phone Technology</b>	Overview and recommendations end 2009, finalise by mid 2010.  Implementation as contracts run out.	Waiting costs analysis from overview.
<b>Mobile Phone Technology</b>	Overview and recommendations end 2009, finalise by mid 2010.  Implementation as contracts run out.	Waiting costs analysis from overview.
<b>Online Conferencing</b>	Roll out as IT program is implemented.  Finalise by 2011.	Nil
<b>IT Infrastructure</b>	Overview and recommendations end 2009, finalise by mid 2010.  Implementation as contract runs out. Aim to finalise by 2011.	Waiting costs analysis from overview.
<b>IT</b>	Overview and recommendations end 2009, finalise by mid 2010.  Implementation as contract runs out. Aim to finalise by 2011.	Waiting costs analysis from overview.
<b>Micro Blogging (Twitter etc)</b>	Set up by start of 2010 season.	NIL