

## **Media Release**



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### **START**

#### **UMPIRING, BIGGER, BETTER, STRONGER**

AFL Wimmera Mallee is proud to announce that all football umpiring within the Horsham and District Football and Netball League and the Wimmera Football League will be conducted from one Umpiring Group.

AFL Wimmera Mallee has been in discussions with the two local Umpire bodies since the conclusion of the 2015 season. With the inclusion of both leagues and all clubs, the overwhelming direction was that it is now time to have all Umpiring under the one banner.

The working Party chaired by AFL Wimmera Mallee Commissioner Col Thompson has been investigating the best possible structures under which Umpires and Umpiring can grow and flourish. Representatives from the Wimmera Football Umpires Group, Wimmera Football Umpires Association, Horsham and District Football and Netball League, Wimmera Football league and AFL Wimmera Mallee made up the working party.

Col Thompson said 'the working party continually talked about the Umpires as a group being bigger, better, stronger, which totally encompasses what we set out to do. Umpires and Umpiring is important to our game so as a Commission it is paramount that we do everything we can to ensure we have a great Umpiring department'.

The one group, responsible to the AFL Wimmera Mallee Commission will seek to employ a suitably qualified Manager of Umpires that will have measurable key performance indicators around recruitment into Umpiring, retention of umpires and the continual process of education and improvement.

"I commend both Umpire bodies, firstly for taking this on in a serious manner and secondly for being so open minded in looking at the bigger picture stuff, our combined focus was always in the best interests of umpiring and by extension football. Along with recruitment, retention and continuous improvement the Commission will focus heavily on the relationship between umpires and players/supporters. We believe that it is now time to seriously tackle the abuse umpires have had to unfairly deal with. " Col said.

AFL Wimmera Mallee will advertise for the position of Manager of Umpiring with a desire to have an appointment made allowing time for the program to be established prior to the commencement of the 2016 season.

END

For more information please contact;

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