

Central Murray Football & Netball League

&

Golden Rivers Football & Netball League

REVIEW

RECOMMENDATIONS

August 2018



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INTRODUCTION

In August 2017 the Central Murray AFL Commission invited representatives of the Central Murray Football Netball League (CMFNL), the Golden Rivers Football Netball League (GRFL), local media and local government to a meeting to discuss the health and future of our football & netball clubs.

Around 60 people attended the meeting, with all clubs in both leagues being represented.

From the meeting it was unanimously agreed that a review into football and netball be undertaken. The meeting established a Working Party and determined:

- The terms of reference of the review,
- The broad membership of the Working Party to include key community personnel, as well as league and club representatives,
- The Working Party report timeline,
- The consultation process with clubs, and
- The Review would be a bottom-up process; any final recommendations would need to be agreed to by a majority of clubs.

All clubs completed an online survey providing their views on what structures needed to be initiated to deal with the scarcity of players and volunteers.

AFL Regional General Manager, Bruce Petering met with all clubs in both leagues to discuss each club's survey responses. These anecdotal comments were also included in the Working Party's discussions.

The Working Party formerly met monthly, as well as, email draughts and discussions to hone their thoughts and reach consensus. In the final stages of the review, the draft recommendations were sent to all clubs and they were invited to comment on each draft recommendation. Every club in both leagues submitted feedback to the Working Party.

The Working Party met on the 6 August 2018 to redraft their final recommendations which were then provided to the Central Murray AFL Commission for signing-off.

This report contains the final recommendations. The league boards and clubs are now required to formally adopt, or reject the work of the Working Party. The decision is now yours. If the majority of clubs and league boards reject the recommendations, they will not be implemented.

The Review Working Party



(L to R) Ian Ray, Greg Bear, Neville Brady, Simon Morton, Scott McNeil, Zoe Ferrier, John Brookshaw, Alan Mitchell, Ron Stanton. (Absent; Neil Mesley, Gavin Hore, Bruce Petering)

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PARTICIPATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Junior Football: Age Groups

CMFNL	Team Sizes	GRFNL	Team Sizes
Under 17.5	18+4	Under 17.5	16+2
Under 14.5	18+4	Under 14	16+2
Under 12	18+4	Under 10 To include Auskick	Flexible
Auskick Under 9	flexible		

- Strict four (4) year age gap allowed in every grade across both leagues, or no more than one year outside of age groupings lowest age (whichever is the least);
Purpose: To contain the physical size and capacity differences between players.
- Clubs that have additional players in junior grades on a weekly basis are advised to either;
 - Formally create a relationship with a “sister club” (CMFNL to GRFNL) to allow these players to participate under a permit arrangement with the “sister club”, OR
 - Nominate players to the Regional Administration Centre who will arrange games on a weekly basis under a permit system;*Purpose: To potentially share any player surplus around clubs and to ensure all participants get a game each week.*
- Cap the maximum games played by a junior in a season to 28 (excluding finals);
Purpose: All research concludes that too much competitive sport at junior ages leads to burn-out. AFL policy is 24 games in a season, excluding finals. This recommendation moves the focus from “fielding a team” to the welfare of the individual player.
- The Mercy Rule implemented at U/14.5 or lower age groups;
Purpose: Young people lose interest in football and netball when the margin between two teams on any one day is excessive. This is exacerbated when teams are regularly “hammered”.
- All clubs recommended to implement senior half-time game for Auskick as per above table;
Purpose: Promotion of the sport to the next generation and give juniors a variation from their regular Auskick schedule.
- The Equalisation Policy adopted and enforced across all grades of football, excluding senior XVIII football.
Purpose: This policy aims to provide football for all grades, other than the senior grade, where insufficient numbers exist prior to a match commencing. There is always an even number of players at all times on the field.

Open Age Football

- Reserves grade, can play up to;
 - CMFNL – 18 on field, 4 interchange,
 - GRFNL – 16 on field, 3 interchange,
 - With a strict Equalisation Policy in place,
- No player under the age of sixteen y. o. (16) to be allowed to compete in open age competitions. (Unless an exemption is granted)

2. SUSTAINABILITY

RECOMMENDATIONS

All clubs develop and submit a Strategic / Viability Plan by end of the 2018 calendar year.

Purpose: Move clubs from a yearly day-to-day cycle to articulating where your club is heading by setting long-term goals and priorities for the future.

- All clubs to complete the Club Health & Sustainability Audit by end of this calendar year;
- Based on the results of the Club Health & Sustainability Audit clubs are to complete and submit to the relevant league board their club's Strategic/Viability Plan;
- Free facilitation support will be provided to all clubs to assist the completion of this process;
- Clubs to submit Strategic/Viability Plan every 3 years.

All clubs to achieve minimum standards in each of the first three (3) criteria in order to remain in their competition.

CRITERIA / KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ACTUAL	MINIMUM STANDARD
1. Junior numbers required to field all underage sides.		≥ 80 %
2. Senior numbers required to field all senior sides.		≥ 80 %
3. All Board/Committee portfolios filled.		≥ 100 %
4. Financial Viability – Audited financial statements		3-year nett positive position
5. Facility Development Master Plan		Less than five years old
6. Membership numbers (paid up members)		3 year rolling increase
7. Average Club Health & Sustainability Audit Score		≥ 70 per cent

NOTE;

- 80% calculated on;
 - CMFNL – Seniors & Reserves = 44 (seniors & reserves with 18 on field and 4 interchange);
 - CMFNL – Juniors = 66 (U/17.5, U/14.5 & U/12 with 18 on field and 4 interchange);
 - GRFNL – Seniors & Reserves = 40 (seniors 18 on field and 3 interchange, reserves 16 on field and 3 interchange);
 - GRFNL – Juniors = 36 (U/17.5 & U/14 with 16 on field and 2 interchange).
- Clubs will be required to submit actual numbers to the league board against the criteria four weeks prior to the commencement of the season. Validation of actual numbers to be verified by actual players participating after three weeks of competition. Penalties to apply for breaches.
- An Appeal Policy and process be developed by the AFL Central Murray Commission for;
 - Clubs to appeal any ruling by the league in respect to “failing to meet” any criterion;
 - Any penalty applied for misinformation in the validation process of the criterion.
- AFL CM, CMFNL & GRFNL to finance independent facilitator to conduct the Club Health & Sustainability Audit, verification and strategy determination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Merge the Central Murray and Golden Rivers boards to form the 'Central Murray & Golden Rivers Football League Board' with the Commission remaining an oversight body.

Purpose: Most clubs accepted the premise that the 'status quo' must be improved. One board with two leagues is the most appropriate model to manage our future. This is not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution but a model which recognizes the unique strengths and characteristics of each league.

With the support of the AFL Central Murray Commission the merged board would be tasked to develop:

- A vision for football & netball across our leagues;
- A Strategic Plan detailing the actions to achieve the vision and the key performance measures that demonstrate how effectively the merged board is achieving its key objectives;
- To be completed within 12 months of the boards merging.

Overtime the merged board may well become the CM Commission.

What will remain unchanged;

- League names and clubs competing within each league;
- By-Laws of each league to remain, unless required to change by the merged board;
- The current league meetings remain on a separate league basis;
- Cost structure in each league to remain the same, or potentially reduce.

How will the new Board be created?

- Structure with portfolio's – see Appendix 1;
- Draft Constitution – see Appendix 2;
- Merged board system to be trialled for two years;
 - Current league assets to be documented within a register,
 - Current retained earnings to be invested into the new Incorporated Association,
 - If demerger is the outcome of the trial, all funds repaid to original leagues by the percentage provided at the merger.
- The review of the trial will be published in September 2020, which will enable clubs and leagues to act on their findings in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reduce the complexity and volunteer fatigue by developing a RAC fee for service offer.

Purpose: The universal complaint from clubs is the onerous paperwork and red tape they are forced to complete in order to manage their clubs. Some user pays tasks are best suited to a central service; the merged board will explore with clubs what opportunities exist.

Through immediate savings and efficiencies of merging the two league boards, the Regional Administration Centre can potentially provide a service such as;

- Manage and complete the JLT insurance claims for participants from clubs within the two leagues;
- Manage and monitor the Child Safe Standards and implementation including, maintaining the WWCC database.

The offer may include (but is not limited to) providing a service that:

- Ensures the right financial/administration structures are in place;
- The proper cash handling procedures are in place;
- Player payments are compliant with all legal obligations;
- Player Registrations are completed efficiently and timely;
- Develops and manages a Marketing & Sponsorship plan;
- Manages membership capture and communications;
- Provides for club merchandise sales to its supporters and members;
- Trains and models proper meeting procedures and documentation that is compliant with legal requirements.

PROCESS TO CONCLUSION

1. CIRCULATE THE FINAL REVIEW RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT TO ALL CLUBS AND LEAGUE BOARDS
2. JOINT LEAGUE CLUB MEETINGS TO GO THROUGH THE DETAILS AND PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO THE FINDINGS
3. CLUB VOTE TO ENDORSE RECOMMENDATIONS
4. IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE END OF THE SEASON