



FOOTBALL  
VICTORIA



# ANNUAL REPORT

Football Victoria 2023



# LIVE AND LOVE FOOTBALL FOR EVER

# 2023

**Football Victoria**  
Annual Report

**Our team of more than 70  
people helps to deliver  
over 40,000 football matches  
every football season.**

Together with thousands of club  
volunteers, match officials, administrators,  
coaches, players and fans, we each play  
a vital role in making football happen,  
every week on pitches across the state.

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# Reconfirming our commitment to our key stakeholders

## FOOTBALL VICTORIA 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

*An overview of our 2023 performance*

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## BOARD MEETINGS

	06 MAR	01 MAY	29 MAY	28 AUG	26 SEP	30 OCT
Antonella Care   President	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jo Bladen   Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lee Sammartino   Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
Simi Solowiejczk   Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
Harry Zaitman   Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
Steve Forbes   Director	1	—	1	1	1	1
Azmeena Hussain   Director <sup>1</sup>	1	1	—	1	1	1
Nick Vamvakas   Director <sup>2</sup>	1	1	1	1	1	1
	8	7	7	8	8	8

<sup>1</sup> Resigned, 27 September 2023

<sup>2</sup> Appointed, 17 October 2023



## CEO Report

# A HISTORIC YEAR

2023 will go down in history as the year women's football was placed in the upper echelon of sport whilst driving unparalleled interest, exposure, excitement, aspirations, and needs to drive new participants, spectators, administrators, and volunteers to our game.



Figures surpassing all expectations

# 81,060

ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS

**+41% Increase**  
Coach Registrations

**Additional 321**  
New Referees to the pitch







We began the year with an extension of our FootbALLways Strategy with a focus on connecting passion through the FIFA WWC23 with progression towards achieving 50:50.

We waited with bated breath, prepared with excitement, and anticipated what could be, hoping that possibility could be realised. Then it came and we rode the wave of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ watching our beloved CommBank Matildas and the pantheon of global football nations fight for glory. This was not just incredible for football, but for sport more broadly, and we should all be very proud of the role we all play in breaking down the glass ceiling to create opportunities that steer us towards a more safe, fair, and equitable society.

Building and strengthening our existing work, coordinating our efforts to improve our systems, practices, processes, and delivery, and our commitment to an equitable landscape by 2027 has been central to all our decision making. We have pivoted and adjusted our thinking, serviced our clubs and our community, and used a whole-of-sport approach to change that considers the unique needs, interests, and abilities of a diverse community as an enabler that connects, unifies, and advances football.

## Participants and Clubs

Our football community relies on many volunteers who give up their own time to service football clubs across Victoria each season and for those of you providing a valuable point of connection, and for leading positive change within local communities and clubs, we thank you, and remain indebted to your dedication and servitude.

Football Victoria continues to remain committed to work in all areas of inclusion including people with disabilities and impairment, multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTQI+ communities. Placing an intersectional lens to understand the differing needs of our community is paramount to informing engagement strategies and outcomes achieved through programs such as Walking Football, Multicultural Settlement Program, and All Abilities.

Closing the gender gap has gained momentum with a record number of Victorian clubs driving equitable outcomes. One of our successes is the Change Makers program and I would like to recognise and thank the Victorian Government for providing funding through the Preventing Violence Through Sport grant to further drive this program in partnership with Victoria University and Regional Sport Victoria. We thank the many clubs who have engaged with this innovative, sector-leading model for change, and for their commitment in creating evidence-informed action plans that are transforming gendered inequities in their own context.

In November 2023, the National Club Changer program shows Victoria eclipsing the nation with a total of 150 Victorian clubs becoming a 1 Star Club, and a total of 200 clubs completing the Victorian Women and Girls module.









We remain indebted once again to the Victorian Government for funding received through the Together More Active program that will shift the focus to one that engages men to share the accountability to strengthen the current work we are undertaking.

We continue to build relationships with Victorian Futsal clubs who now form part of the Victorian football pathway and will continue our servicing and collaboration with them. Spanning a funding period from 2017 to 2023, our partnership with VicHealth through our GO Soccer Mums program came to an end. A total of 2,766 women and gender diverse people participated through 178 programs, and we celebrated their involvement at our Awards night. We were further celebrated as the winner of the VicSport Community Sporting Event of the Year Award for our GO Soccer Mums Cup Day.

We captured the moments on and off the pitch, showcased the program during the Women's World Cup, expanded into Futsal, connected with a breadth of critical partners, and created Grants to make it easier for clubs to begin. Our heartfelt thanks to VicHealth for your trust and support, and particularly to Vanessa Phillips, Shelley White and Genna Vlitas who helped make this partnership so incredibly wonderful. To our GO Soccer Mums Clubs, deliverers, and participants, thank you for making this so incredibly rewarding.

We are currently undertaking a Regional Review to determine an optimal operating model to improve the function, efficiency, capacity, and overall football experience in regional Victoria. The review has explored all key components of the football ecosystem, with some key findings currently underway. Thank you to those involved who have provided insight that will determine the key recommendations.

## Unifying Football

A number of Constitutional changes were approved at the Special General Meeting in November, and I would like to congratulate the FV Board, the Constitutional Reform Project Committee and the Members for their vision, extensive consultation, and commitment to drive change. Witnessing the unanimous vote to adopt a momentous 40:40:20 requirement in the Constitution was historical for Victorian football and will ensure we can't step backwards.

We continued to drive programs in schools for a new generation of young students to learn, to engage, and to develop through football. We produced new policies, drafted a Reconciliation Action Plan, and joined CMSport and a collective of sports to work together to tackle racism.

Child Safety remains a number one priority with the Child Safe Standards there to improve safety for children and young people. Football Victoria are committed to providing the highest level of safety for all involved in football and will continue to work directly with our clubs and our staff to ensure we continue to promote and uphold positive behaviours and attitudes and protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of our members, including young and vulnerable persons.

*"We captured the moments on and off the pitch, showcased the program during the Women's World Cup, expanded into Futsal, connected with a breadth of critical partners, and created Grants to make it easier for clubs to begin."*

## Infrastructure

We are working alongside the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation to ensure our clubs and associations support and adhere to the policies and practices established within the Fair Access Policy Roadmap relevant to equitable infrastructure and pitch access.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Federal, State, and local governments who have invested heavily in our game, and none moreso than through the delivery of the Home of the Matildas. This facility highlights our commitment to gender equity by promoting our game across the entire football pathway and providing an administrative, training and education hub for localised, national, and international football administration and games. It was completed in time for the FIFA Women's World Cup and used as a training ground for Team Jamaica and since then has hosted training camps and elite pathway programs for women and girls as athletes, coaches, referees, and administrators.

We have gained the utilisation of approximately 150 Full Size Equivalent/Indoor pitches since 2016 with the bulk of our ~\$400m infrastructure funding since 2020, directed towards growing the Female Facilities footprint.

We continue to speak of Legacy and what that means for football. We must be prepared to change, to embrace our differences, and to listen to diverse opinions. We must also stand together to rid our game of the disrespectful, abusive, and anti-social behaviours that seep into our core from time-to-time. I am confident we will continue to achieve, as we work together as one, united in our vision and our application for a level playing field that supports, nurtures, and welcomes everyone to belong, no matter your background, your ability, your circumstances, or your identified gender. We cannot risk being apathetic for this will ensure that the hard-fought gains will be lost.

Thank you to the Executive team of Mandy McCarter, Dan Birrell, Emilio Amanatidis, and Simon Avenell, our incredible Department Heads, and all our dedicated staff who work tirelessly to continue to drive positive outcomes to develop football. Our thanks to former CEO Kimon Taliadoros who resigned in September, and to our Zone Members and Standing Committees who each played a significant part in the growth of our game. To our Victorian athletes, coaches, referees, volunteers, and administrators we thank you for your involvement and passion. To our clubs, you are the epicenter of our game, and the reason for our existence. We are here to serve you to help make our game the very best it can be and we recognise the immense contribution you make to football.



Acting CEO

**Karen Pearce OAM**





*"In closing I would like to offer my personal thanks and appreciation to Antonella Care, the FV Board of Directors and the Executive team for their guidance and incredible support whilst I took over the Acting CEO role in September. I look forward to working with you all once again throughout 2024 and beyond."*



## Note from the President

# CHANGING OUR GAME

**Football has the power to unite people from different backgrounds, cultures, and nations. It transcends language and borders, creating a sense of community and shared passion among fans worldwide.**

**It can be played anywhere, from professional stadiums to local parks. The game's fluidity, unpredictability, and moments of brilliance make it captivating to participate in and to watch.**

Never more so than when the eyes of the world were on Australia, as the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ (FIFAWWC) hit our shores. Significantly, the tournament marked the first time we have seen the true, raw power of women's football, what a privilege it was to watch our game unite the country. After so much anticipation, it was humbling to see Victorians of all ages and backgrounds flock to Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, Federation Square, fan zones and community events to celebrate the world game and create iconic scenes which reverberated around the world.

The tournament also acted as the catalyst for the largest football specific infrastructure investment in Australia, The Victorian State Football Centre and Home of the Matildas at La Trobe University (HoTM). The facility officially opened in July, ahead of the FIFAWWC and became FV's new permanent home in October.

Although designed as a state-of-the-art complex suitable for our national heroes (with the CommBank Matildas, CommBank Young Matildas, ParaMatildas and Jamaica's Reggae Girlz all calling our venue home this year), the most exciting impact the facility is having is the access at community level. Through tournaments, gala days and events, footballers of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to train and play at a world-class facility for the very first time. What a thrill it was watching this year's NPLW grand final played in front of a bumper crowd!

On behalf of FV and everyone in the Victorian football family, I once again would like to send my appreciation to the Victorian and Federal Governments for their investments. The HoTM has quickly become a symbol of empowerment and equity, and will undoubtedly have an immeasurable influence on Victorian football for decades to come.

The immense interest in our game at the elite level is echoed throughout every level of football and I'm thrilled to announce participation in 2023 was at an all-time high. From the grassroots up, more girls, boys, women and men are now playing our game than ever before. Most pleasing is that the growth is tangible across all formats of the game, a testament to the FootbALLways strategy, which was extended at the start of the year.

FV's wide range of social programs thrived in 2023, while our All-Abilities offerings went from strength-to-strength. These, along with our competitive formats facilitated new and inclusive avenues for people of all backgrounds and skill levels to take to the field.

Another format to have flourished is Futsal, which spring-boarded from the National Futsal Championships, held in Melbourne in early January. Futsal has continued to grow at a phenomenal rate in recent years and the increase of affiliated centres and clubs in 2023 culminated in the launch of the F-League in September.









President Football Victoria

**Antonella Care**

*"I am excited to see how football evolves in 2024, and I am certain Football Victoria will continue to play a significant role in shaping the future of football and its growth over the course of the next 12 months."*



With so many unique pathways contributing to an increase of participation on the field, I am proud to announce we also experienced a substantial increase in coach and referee registrations.

We saw over 300 new referees take to the pitch in 2023 and we are anticipating many more, with enormous interest in our recent training courses. Most notably in November, FV hosted a female only referee course and covered the cost for participants, resulting in 90 new attendees ready to commence their referee journey.

Furthermore, our referee community celebrated a new apparel partnership in October, and, in another leap towards achieving 50:50, we saw the introduction of specifically designed 'female cut kits' to Victorian referees. Respect persists as an ongoing challenge for us as a football community, but 2023 has seen the implementation of better support systems to promote referee wellbeing. We look forward to continuing to work with our clubs and members to build bridges and condemn anti-social behaviour both on and off the park.

Coaching numbers grew throughout 2023, with FV showing dedication to recruit and develop coaches at all levels. The inspiring Nike F.C. Coaching Scholarships, part of the innovative new Nike FC Accelerator Program, empowered a new wave of women and girls to start their coaching journeys, while our core programs like the Club Coach Coordinator Program continued to be instrumental in guiding new and emerging leaders.

With participation expected to continue its trajectory in 2024, more players naturally means a higher demand for coaches and referees. Following a successful 2023, we will continue to innovate and invest in initiatives that promote both growth and retention.

Our game would not survive without the support of partners at all levels of the game. I would also like to thank FV's proud sponsors for their dedication to football, and also pass on my gratitude to the many businesses who sponsor Clubs and allow them to reinvest into the game.

In 2023, Football Victoria experienced some changes in its staff, with individuals joining and leaving the organisation. Staff turnover is a common occurrence in any organisation,

and it can be influenced by various factors such as personal decisions, career opportunities, or organisational restructuring. These changes can bring fresh perspectives, skills, and experiences to football, while also creating opportunities for growth and development.

We also acknowledge Karen Pearce OAM, who has done a remarkable job as Acting CEO in these past months. Karen has played a crucial role in providing leadership, I personally would like to thank her for her commitment and the extra effort she put in to lead FV through some challenging situations. Following a comprehensive recruitment process, the Board will announce FV's new CEO at the upcoming Annual General Meeting on Monday, December 11.

Appointing a new leader will usher in an exciting new era for Victorian football, as will the changes to FV's constitution that were approved in November's Special General Meeting (SGM). A number of significant changes to FV's governance structure were announced following the SGM, including the approval of a shift in membership structure.

FV's membership structure will transition from the current system, to a one club, one vote model. This system will revert power back to our clubs and ensure that all of our members have an equal voice.

In a momentous leap forward for football, we also saw a vote to enshrine the 40:40:20 principle in our Constitution. Committing to a 40% male, 40% female and 20% any gender identity for our Board and members showcases the incredible progress our game has made, something we should all be remarkably proud of. On behalf of FV, I congratulate our Members for their vision, and commitment to drive change.

In terms of leadership, the membership also voted unanimously to retain the current Board. I am honoured with the faith the football community has shown in me personally by extending my tenure for a further 12 months and I look forward to leading FV through this exciting period. As we close out the 2023 season, on behalf of Football Victoria's (FV) Board of Directors, management and staff, I would like to thank each and every one of the volunteers, families, parents, administrators and players who have been involved in this game-changing year of football.

## Women and Girls

# BUILDING INCLUSIVITY

**On Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September FV, led by the Women and Girls team, held the Inaugural Women and Girls Football Extravaganza at The Home of The Matildas. The event showcased 160 participants across 14 teams in a GO Soccer Mums Cup, which was significant increase from the GO Soccer Mums Cup held in 2022 (78 players from 11 teams).**

Aiming to celebrate female and gender diverse participation in football, the day also included GO Soccer Mums Come and Try sessions. 58 new people participated in one of 2 sessions led by local clubs within the Darebin City Council. In 3 subsequent sessions 61 adolescents took part in a GO Girls Come and Try session, also led by local clubs.

As we actively work to make football a more inclusive space, the day included a showcase match between women and gender diverse people who are deaf or hard of hearing. 17 recreational players took the pitch to play in the friendly match. Their involvement in the day has led to our first deaf/hard of hearing GO Soccer Mums program.

14 All Abilities participants, 24 Walking Football players and 57 MiniRoos kids also took part in fun football sessions across the day. Working with the broader diversity and inclusion team at Football Victoria, and Victorian Football Australia staff, these activities showcase the collaborative work that occurs on a regular basis.

**Highlight for Regional Hume / Loddon Mallee Zone:**  
**GO Soccer Mums Albury Hotspurs Soccer Club**

Albury Hotspurs Soccer Club ran their first ever GO Soccer Mums program in Term 4, 2023, and have had an overwhelming interest in the program with over 50 participants who have registered! This has been one of our biggest ever GO Soccer Mums programs in Victoria and we can't wait to see what comes of it in 2024!

**Highlight for Metro North Zone:**  
**GO Girls Hub – Meri-Bek City Council**

Earlier in Term 4, Meri-Bek City Council in collaboration with FV ran two GO Girls Hubs out of CB Smith Reserve in Fawkner and Clifton Park in Brunswick on a Wednesday and a Thursday, respectively. With great interest having been shown by 16 participants in the Wednesday program, Meri-Bek made the decision to extend the program from the initial 4 weeks to a total of 8 weeks! The program is offered free of charge to residents of Meri-Bek and clubs within the Meri-Bek jurisdiction will be linked in throughout the later stages of the program.

**Highlight for South East Zone:**  
**Mornington Peninsula**

GO Girls program run in conjunction with the Mornington Peninsula Shire and run at Mt Martha SC as the first of a number of GG programs to be run at various locations on the Peninsula, has so far attracted over 50 girls aged 8-16years.





## Legacy 23 Activities


The incredible event that bought our nation together and grew the love of the game through our amazing national team and the many players and stories that the tournament uncovered, changed the narrative almost overnight from “female football” to simply ‘football’.

This incredible journey is part of our Legacy 23 activities. We looked at how we could deliver opportunities for those who were touched by the power of football throughout the FIFA Women’s World Cup and how we could support them knowing that so much interest would occur at the end of the traditional football season and therefore many clubs would not have access to grounds as they hand over to summer sports. With the help of many of the LGA’s the creation of 14 Council supported Social Football Hubs has occurred. We have achieved this in conjunction with multiple Clubs supporting come and try, Go Girls events to ensure Football was available in the community.

These activities have seen our summer player numbers in girls and women grow from approximately 1900 in 2022 to almost 6000 in 2023! There is no question that we are seeing enormous growth in female football activations as part of our Legacy outcomes from the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023!







The Home of The Matildas

# INSPIRING FUTURE LEADERS

Following five years of consultation, planning and construction, the most significant infrastructure accomplishment in the history of Australian football; The State Football Centre and The Home of The Matildas at La Trobe University; was officially opened mid-year.



IG





The Home of The Matildas

# A NEW LOCATION

Football Victoria, in conjunction with La Trobe University and Football Australia and with the generous support of the Victorian Government and Federal Government; proudly unveiled the precinct on July 4, 2023, marking a historic moment for football in Victoria.

The state-of-the-art facility symbolises a transformative leap forward for our game – particularly for women and girls in football, who now have a home where they are welcomed and supported to follow their dreams.

The precinct was formally opened on July 4 by The Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events – the same day that the CommBank Matildas held their first training session at their new home, in preparation for their monumental FIFA Women's World Cup™ campaign.





The project was funded as part of a \$101 million investment by the Labor Government into the La Trobe University Sports Park, with the \$42.29 million for The Home of The Matildas – the biggest investment ever made by any level of government for a football-specific project in Australia – made in addition to the Federal Government’s contribution of \$15 million.

Designed by leading female architects to assist our elite sports women taking on the world, the precinct features two state-of-the-art hybrid turf pitches, two FIFA-grade synthetic pitches (with another to be constructed in 2024), twelve change rooms (including the CommBank Matildas’ own, customised changing room), a fully-equipped gym, outstanding medical facilities, modern wet recovery areas, premium function rooms, meeting spaces and a boutique, 800-seat grandstand with elevated sight lines.

Nestled within La Trobe University’s sprawling Sports Park, the facility boasts cutting-edge infrastructure to cater to the specific needs of elite athletes. The facility will deliver an experience unparalleled in Australian football and has been designed with the aspiration of becoming the finest female-focused facility in Asia, a living testament to Football Victoria’s goal of achieving gender equity in football by 2027.

However, it is not only the elite who will benefit – hundreds of community footballers will have the opportunity to train and play on the same fields as their heroes, creating a tangible pathway from the grassroots to the elite at one single venue for the very first time.

The drive for equity extends well beyond the details embedded in the facility design, with all partnerships and service providers asked to demonstrate their commitment to gender equity, cementing this venue as a hub for inclusion, growth and change.

In the short time the facility has been open, it has hosted two senior national teams – The CommBank Matildas and Jamaica’s Reggae Girlz; The Young Matildas; the 2023 IFCPF Asia-Oceania Championships; NPL Victoria and VPLW Finals Series matches; The Nike FC Cup Finals; Battle of The States double-header; a range of football events and galas including the inaugural Nike FC Cup Juniors, Women & Girls Football Extravaganza, CCC Gala Day, Football Australia & Football Victoria coaching courses, A-League Women’s matches and many more community training and football events.

The facility is now the headquarters for Football Victoria and the home base for many of Victoria’s major football programs as part of the venue’s designation as the State Football Centre.

The Victorian football community can access the facility via a booking system to be launched late 2023.

Attention will quickly turn to Stage Two of the precinct, with aspirations for further grandstand seating and community facilities to support the needs of footballers across Victoria, Australia and internationally.

The investment in this ground-breaking precinct is not just about football facilities; it is an investment in a brighter, more equitable future for women in sports, setting the stage for continued success on and off the pitch.



## Facilities and Infrastructure

# CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

In the previous five years, Victoria's Andrews-Allen Government has spent close to \$400 million on football facilities, the largest investment in football by any government at any level in Australia's history. It is something that the Victorian football family should be proud of, helping us directly address the capacity gap identified in the State Football Facilities Strategy to 2026.

Those investments in significant projects across Victoria saw a host of new and upgraded facilities open across the state this year, many of which were part-funded by the highly successful World Game Facilities Fund and the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund.

We had a particular focus on driving female-friendly facilities and were delighted to see these come online at multiple venues, including Ross Reserve in Dandenong, Millgrove Recreation Reserve in the Yarra Valley, Hume Recreation Reserve in Geelong, Partingtons Flat in Greensborough, Newhaven Recreation Reserve in Phillip Island, Estuary Reserve in Leopold and at Monterey Park in Frankston. Lobbying for female-friendly facilities will remain a core focus of Football Victoria's advocacy for many years to come.

Ballarat was the clear standout in regional Victoria, with the opening of the \$10.2 million Wendouree West Recreation Reserve and the \$5.8 million Victoria Park Sport and Community Facility project, added to \$1.2 million of upgrades being completed at Pleasant Street Reserve. Combined, those upgrades will give the local community a football experience equal to anywhere in Victoria.

However, the State Government's decision to enact its COVID Debt Repayment Plan in this year's State Budget foretold reduced spending across all forms of infrastructure. This will likely create challenges regarding new facilities and upgrades in the coming years.

Despite this, we will be imploring all levels of Government to keep investing in football facilities wherever possible, knowing that failing to do so will stymie the development



**\$400<sub>m</sub>**  
**FOOBBALL FACILITIES**

**5 Year Government Spend**  
Andrews-Allen Government

**\$10.2m Ballarat Victoria**  
Wendouree West Recreation Reserve

**\$5.8m Regional Project**  
Victoria Park Sport & Community Facility





of the next generation of Matildas and Socceroos – and that the sport’s 14.99% growth in 2023 is a sign of the game’s unmistakable popularity.

We are particularly eager to realise our long-term vision of ‘Regional Hubs’: 4-6 pitch facilities in locations where there is exceeding demand for the game – from inner suburban locations where space is limited to the booming outer suburbs, and our game’s key rural centres.

Despite no longer hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games, we are delighted the State Government has maintained its commitment to redeveloping one of Victorian football’s most loved and iconic venues, the Gippsland Sports and Entertainment Centre (formerly known as Falcons Park) in Morwell.

Football Victoria has been activating robustly for the redevelopment of the venue since 2017 and have been working with Latrobe City Council and the State Government to secure the upgrade that will restore the venue to its former status as the finest regional football centre in Australia. With plans set to be unveiled in early 2024, construction is expected to be completed in mid-2026.

Heading into next year, we will continue to robustly advocate for gender equity through the Fair Access Policy, which is due for formal implementation in 2026. Pleasingly, we have noticed many LGAs already moving ahead on this strategy and, like FV, remain firmly committed to delivering gender equity, using facilities as a key lever in driving positive social change.

## Technical

# FOOTBALL IN DETAIL

Code	Courses	Participants
MiniRoos	48	580
Skill Training	25	367
Game Training	7	112
C Diploma	8	212
B Diploma	3	92
Level 1 GK Licence	1	11
Futsal Certificate Course	3	41
Workshop (online) - Coach Education	6	67
Workshop - Advanced Coaches	1	73

## Coaching Course Numbers



# 3,255

MEMBERS ON FACEBOOK  
COACHHQ PAGE

# 2022

COACHING CONFERENCE

# 166

ATTENDEES

# 58

REGISTRATIONS

## CCC Program

**+400** PLAYERS  
PARTICIPATED  
ACROSS **30**  
TEAMS AT  
INAUGURAL  
GALA DAY AT HOM

OVER **50** VISITS TO  
**20** PACKAGED CLUBS

**+250** COACHES ON  
LEARNING PORTAL

**+350** COACHES WE  
WORKED WITH

# +46%

INCREASE IN CLUBS

# 70

 CLUBS  
IN 2022

# 102

 CLUBS  
IN 2023


# 305

CCC FACEBOOK  
MEMBERS 2022

# 635

CCC FACEBOOK  
MEMBERS 2023



## SAP

In 2023, Football Victoria's Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP) Program continued to flourish across Victoria, providing a valuable part-time training and development platform for young boys and girls aged 9-12, complementing their club football experience.

Throughout the year, more than 500 players, including over 150 girls, participated in the SAP Program. To ensure effective training and development, the participants were grouped into various zones based on their geographical location and gender. For girls, these zones included Metro and Regional divisions, while boys were divided into North, West, South-East, and Regional categories.

Metro players enjoyed five training blocks throughout the year, where they received weekly training sessions. Regional players engaged in four Regional Camps during school holidays, spanning an intensive two-day period, consisting of multiple training sessions and games.

The program also featured six Gala Days throughout the year, where players represented their respective zones and engaged in developmental matches against other SAP zones. Moreover, players aged between U10-12 had the opportunity to be selected for FV SAP Select Games, held at the conclusion of each training block. These Select Games served as a significant experience for both players and coaches within the program.

FV remains committed to fostering the development of technical skills in SAP age groups, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with Victorian players, coaches, and clubs.

## Talented Player Programs - Girls

In 2023, FV witnessed significant growth and development within the Girls' Talented Player Programs. The Victorian National Training Centre (NTC) Girls Program operated as a full-time development initiative for talented players in Victoria, with Under 14s, 15s, and 17s teams competing in the U15 and U17 JGNPL, as well as the U19 NPLW competitions. Additionally, FVs Emerging Matildas (FVEM) Program operated full-time as an U20 squad competing in the Senior NPLW competition.

Players participating in the NTC and FVEM Programs dedicated themselves to rigorous training schedules, with 3-4 training sessions per week in addition to weekly fixtures in the NPL competition. Friendly matches against junior boys' teams were also incorporated into the season to provide extra developmental opportunities.

Over the past year, the NTC and FVEM Programs achieved notable success, with 13 players born in 2007/2008 selected for Junior Matildas (U17) Camps or Qualifiers for the 2024 U17 AFC Women's Asian Cup. 6 players from the FVEM Program born in 2004/2005/2006 earned spots in Young Matildas (U20) camps or participated in Qualifiers for the 2024 U20 AFC Women's Asian Cup.

The reach of these programs extended beyond Australian representation, with 2 players also earning recognition for representing youth National Teams for New Zealand and Samoa.

These achievements represent a milestone for the program, and we are excited about the prospect of more Victorians representing national teams in the future.

In addition to FV's full-time programs, we provided opportunities for players in the U13 age group (2010 Born) through the Talent Identification & Development Centre (TIDC) Girls program. This part-time program involved the selection of 40 players based on Expression of Interest (EOI) and club nominations. It featured 2 holiday camps, monthly training sessions, and participation in SAP Gala Days.

Talent Identification Camps were organised during school holidays for the U14, U16, and U18 age groups. These camps included multiple training sessions and development matches for players from JGNPL and Community Clubs. The participation of over 130 players in these camps not only provided development opportunities but also served as a potential platform for Victorian selection at either the National Youth Championships (NYC) or National Training Centre (NTC) Challenge tournaments.

## Talented Player Program (TIDC) - Boys

FV, through the TIDC, offered a part-time training program aimed at identifying and developing talented players across Regional and Metro Victoria, catering to players aged 12-18.

Players across five Regions actively participated in the program's weekly training sessions, gala days, and Regional Talent ID Camps, with over 350 players benefitting from this initiative throughout the year.



## FA Elite Matches

FV hosted a series of high-level and Elite Matches, which played a crucial role in identifying Victorian players for Football Australia National Youth Teams, particularly the U17 Men's national Team (Joeys). Notably, Brad Maloney, the Head Coach of FA Men's U17 National Team (Joeys), joined the event in July.

## FV-State Championship 2023

The FV State Championship is a unique tournament that provides all players selected into the TIDC program with competitive and high-quality football matches. Players representing their respective regions competed over two days, with the added inclusion of Football South Australia's (SA) Boys NTC Program.

## Inaugural State of Origin Cup (U14s)

FV organised the inaugural State of Origin Cup for 2009 (U14) Born Players in 2023. This tournament featured representation from FV, Football Tasmania (FT), Football Queensland (FQ), and Capital Football (ACT). The competition followed a round-robin format, with each team playing three matches. After two days of competitive games, all-Victorian teams emerged as strong contenders, with VIC Navy clinching the title.

## National Youth Championships Girls

In the realm of National Youth Championships, the Victorian Girls squads ventured to Wollongong, NSW, for the 2023 National Youth Championships (NYC) in October. The U14's and U16's teams, led by dedicated coaches, showcased their skills and determination.

The U14 Girls secured victory in the NYC, overcoming a tough challenge in the Semi-Finals against Northern NSW. With a penalty save in the dying minutes of the final match, they were crowned champions.

Meanwhile, the U16 Girls' team displayed their prowess by finishing second in their pool, advancing to the Grand final, where they faced a strong NSW Metro side.

## National Youth Championships Boys

The annual National Youth Championships for boys took place at Valentine Sports Park in Sydney, NSW, and featured the participation of four Victorian teams. In the U15 category, the teams were led by coaches Stan Roumpos (U15 Blue) and Fab Soncin (U15 White), while the U16 squads were coached by Joseph Didulica (U16 White) and Jake Ten Hacken (U16 Blue).

Three of the four Victorian teams progressed to the Semi-Finals during the group phase, leading to an all-Victorian U16 Semi-final. Ultimately, the Victoria Blue teams secured victory in both the U15 and U16 age groups, earning two Championship trophies for Victoria. The Victoria White teams also delivered strong performances throughout the tournament.

Individual accolades were awarded to outstanding players, with Alexander Houridis named the U15 Player of the Tournament and Christian Polyzoudis earning the U16 Player of the Tournament title, highlighting the exceptional talent within the Victorian teams.









## Community Competitions

# 2023 COMPETITIONS

## Fixtures

# 33,937

### METROPOLITAN

# 258

### JUNIOR AND SENIOR FINALS

<b>13,944</b>	MiniRoos Boys
<b>2,155</b>	MiniRoos Girls
<b>8,379</b>	Junior Boys'
<b>2,725</b>	Junior Girls'
<b>220</b>	Victorian Premier League Womens
<b>1,334</b>	Women's State League
<b>3,520</b>	Men's State League
<b>1,493</b>	Men's Metropolitan League
<b>167</b>	Men's Masters

# 2,839

### GEELONG

# 36

### JUNIOR AND SENIOR FINALS

<b>1,461</b>	MiniRoos Boys
<b>369</b>	MiniRoos Girls
<b>412</b>	Junior Boys'
<b>212</b>	Junior Girls'
<b>124</b>	Senior Women
<b>261</b>	Senior Men

## Team Entries

# 3,891

### METROPOLITAN

# 4,229 TOTAL

### COMMUNITY COMPETITION TEAM ENTRY

<b>1,638</b>	MiniRoos Boys'
<b>259</b>	MiniRoos Girls'
<b>979</b>	Junior Boys'
<b>325</b>	Junior Girls
<b>22</b>	Victorian Premier League Womens
<b>152</b>	Women's State League
<b>328</b>	Men's State League
<b>168</b>	Men's Metropolitan League
<b>20</b>	Men's Masters

# 337

### GEELONG

<b>171</b>	MiniRoos Boys
<b>45</b>	MiniRoos Girls
<b>50</b>	Junior Boys'
<b>25</b>	Junior Girls'
<b>15</b>	Senior Women
<b>31</b>	Senior Men

## Player Registrations<sup>1</sup>

# 82,945

TOTAL PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

# 53,849

COMMUNITY COMPETITIONS

**21,334** Metro MiniRoos – 21,334

**19,110** Metro Juniors – 19,110

**11,466** Seniors – 11,466

**1,939** Over 35's – 1,939

**42,150** Male Players – 42,150

**11,677** Female Players – 11,677

# 68,383

COMMUNITY  
COMPETITIONS

# 5,766

NATIONAL  
PREMIER LEAGUES

# 14,534

JUNIOR AND SENIOR FINALS

**10,883** Male Players – 10,883

**3,639** Female Players – 3,639

<sup>1</sup> Futsal and other futsal social competition participation numbers feed into the overall number.

## Social Football

Event	Number of Events Hosted	# of Teams	# of Participants
Boys & Girls FC - Bendigo	1	103	1113
3v3 Championships	1	19	85
5v5 Championships (NEW)	1	20	123
Go Camps (NEW)	3	N/A	192
FV Girls Cup (NEW)	1	24	257
WF7	5	38	350
Nike FC Girls Juniors (NEW)	1	33	425
Boys & Girls FC - Gippsland (NEW)	1	33	312
Corporate Cup (December 2023)	TBC		
Summer Cup (November/December 2023)	1	95	790

# 48

CLUB PROVIDERS ACROSS  
SOCIAL FOOTBALL PROGRAMS

GO Fives  
GO Sevens  
GO Cups

GO Futsal  
GO Events  
GO Girls

GO Soccer Mums  
Women's Football 7's



## NPL and Cups

# 2023 PERFORMANCES



## NPLM

Avondale FC were the dominant side in the 2023 NPL Victoria season finishing in top spot with only 1 loss and an impressive goal difference of 55. Avondale's Liam Boland became the Victorian NPLM all-time leading goal scorer with 100 topflight goals, overtaking South Melbourne and Oakleigh Cannons forward Milos Lujic, who previously held the record with 99 goals.

Premiers Avondale FC capped off an outstanding regular season by claiming the double in the NPLM Victoria Grand Final with an impressive 4-0 win over South Melbourne FC in front of a crowd of close to 5,000 at Olympic Village.

## NPLW

Boroondara Eagles FC were the surprise package in the NPLW season. After their promotion from VPLW Boroondara would finish the season in second place after a loss on the final match day with 12 wins for the season, the most of any club in the league. Boroondara's Kurea Okino was by far the standout player of the season taking out the NPLW Gold Medal, Golden Boot, Players Player award and the NPLW Media player of the year on her way to signing a professional contract with A-League Women's side Melbourne Victory FC.

The NPLW Grand Final saw FC Bulleen Lions take on South Melbourne FC at the Home of the Matildas, in a high scoring affair it was South Melbourne FC who were victorious with a 4-2 victory.





## Australia Cup

The 2023 Australia Cup saw 217 Victorian clubs enter into the Preliminary Rounds playing for the 5 spots to progress through to the National round of 32.

NPLM topflight sides Heidelberg United FC, Melbourne Knights FC & Oakleigh Cannons FC all progressed joined by NPLM2 side Northcote City FC and NPLM3 side Goulburn Valley Suns FC. Melbourne Knights FC progressed all the way through to the semifinals and were valiant in front of a massive home crowd going down to eventual runners up Brisbane Roar 1-0.

## Nike F.C Cup

2023 saw record number of entrants to the Nike F.C. cup with 100 senior women's teams entering the competition. The Community Nike F.C. Cup was also launched in 2023 for the two top seeded clubs outside of the NPLW competing in a cup final.

Calder United SC again showed their dominance in the Nike F.C. Cup final taking out their sixth consecutive cup final victory with a 2-0 win over FC Bullen Lions.

The inaugural Community Nike F.C. Cup final went right down to the wire with Essendon Royals SC defeating Casey Comets FC 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out after a 0-0 stalemate in regular time.

Both the Nike F.C. finals were the first competitive matches to be played out of the Home of The Matildas with a crowd of over 2000 spectators across the double-header.





## Referees

# SUPPORTING OUR TALENTED OFFICIALS

## Introduction

The FV Referee Department underwent a period of change following the 2021 Referee review. This highlighted areas that needed to improve with a wide range of recommendations that have been implemented since.

The Referee Welfare system that has now been used for past 2 seasons has shown our match officials operate in one of the most hostile environments recorded. To curb anti-social behaviour, we are working to establish ways in which action and change can take place on the field and post-match by the introduction of extra education and sanctions to make the game safer for all.

It has long been evident that some aspects of the 'culture' of football negatively impact the games in many ways. We've seen too many referees leave our game prematurely, too many young players driven away by the behaviour of adults, and too many fans who feel unsafe to attend the game they love. Everyone has the right to enjoy our beautiful game regardless of level, gender, or race. We all have a role to play, to ensure our football community is safe and welcoming to everyone in our game.

If you witness anti-social behaviour, please call it out, to stamp it out. Every club is required to have a visible, dedicated supporter marshal on site. Report any incidents directly to them. If you don't receive a satisfactory response, please report it to FV.

I'm sure that all stakeholders agree that action is urgently needed to reverse the growing poor treatment of referees and the risks of young people not seeing football as part of their future, be that as a participant or as a spectator.

## Victorian Officials Performing on the World Stage

Over the course of the past 12 months, we've had Victorians selected in 2 World Cups, Asian Champions League, FIFA U17 World Cup and many more across the Globe. The officials to get to this Elite level have sacrificed many years of dedication and commitment, along with the whole referee community who have assisted them and supported them along their journey.

Kate Jacewiz and Joanna Charaktis were appointed to the FIFA women's world cup on home soil in 2023. They officiated 2 matches fantastically well and received large amounts of worldwide praise.



**GROUP STAGE**  
**France Vs Brazil**  
Brisbane | Australia



**ROUND OF 16**  
**Colombia Vs Jamaica**  
Melbourne | Australia



On the back of this we have gone with a few promotions to make refereeing a course widely available for Women and Girls. The largest ever number of Women and Girls only course in our History, with one course hosting 90 people.

## Education

Our officials have once again dedicated time to physical, Decision making, Psychological skills, and Technical Skills training. Through our E-Learning platform we have delivered 6,830 hours of continuous professional development for referees.

In our Metro and regional training centres, we have delivered 2,440 hours of Group Fitness training. NPL Match officials have had 426 hours of face-to-face Decision making and Technical Skills training.



# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

## Referee Numbers



# 350+

INCREASE OF REFEREES  
COMPARED TO 2022.

# 50%

INCREASE IN  
FEMALE OFFICIALS

# 800

NEW REFEREES  
STARTED IN 2022

## Match Official Pathways

If people think referees aren't **good** enough, that's one debate, but we **won't** make them any **better** by shrinking the talent pool.

# 06

Match officials  
on FIFA panel

# 17

Match officials officiating  
A-League matches

# 03

Football Australia Referee  
Academy Additions

# 33

Selected for accelerated  
development program

# 67

Part of the Football  
Victoria Referee Academy

## Season Highlights

Thank you advance for your contribution to this important work which we hope will lead to long-lasting positive change to the game we all love.



**ADAM BAVCAR**

NPLM Referee  
of the Year



**CAITLIN WILLIAMS**

NPLW Referee  
of the Year



**ASTRO SAKALIS**

NPLM Assistant  
Referee of the Year



**DAPHNE GOUNARIS**

NPLW Assistant  
Referee of the Year



**MICHAEL OULIARIS**

FA NYC U15 Boys  
Referee of the Tournament



## Growth and Development

# DRIVING EXPANSION

**Football Victoria reconfirmed its commitment to its key stakeholders - Clubs, Associations, and all levels of Government - to proactively drive the progress and expansion of the sport across the state.**

This resulted in the introduction of a team of Development Coordinators, both Metropolitan and Regional, with a primary focus of engaging our diverse community with targeted support via:

- The delivery and implementation of the FA Club Changer – Club Development Program to build the capacity, capability, and inclusivity of Clubs.
- Identification and assistance with grant opportunities that increase the overall volume and quality of Club submissions, and leverage funding avenues to meet community needs.
- Establishing and strengthening relationships between Clubs and Councils/Government officials to promote, manage, and implement positive football and community outcomes.
- The completion of football facility audits to establish/maintain a state-wide football facility dataset that enables appropriate planning for future advocacy and investment.

On top of developing a Victorian football facility database through quality audit data, the team of Development Coordinators have also proactively engaged with key local government staff and representatives to ensure that FV understands the vision and planning within each council area, as well as advocating to ensure that local government understand the needs and requirements of our ever-growing sport.

This proactive commitment from FV facilitates a positive planning process that puts our community of clubs in the best position to drive positive facility and infrastructure outcomes – by unlocking more Football needs through better master planning, quality facility plans, etc.

The more that Football is represented in these discussions with Local, State, & Federal Government, the better outcomes that will be achieved for our Clubs and the generations to come.

Additionally, in the ongoing commitment to enhance the landscape of football within Victoria, the Growth and Development team has dedicated itself to the implementation of the Football Australia Club Changer - Club Development Program, in partnership with the Australian Sports Commission and in line with the Legacy23 strategy. This initiative aims to revolutionise and empower clubs, particularly focusing on building capacity, capability, and inclusivity of Women & Girls football following the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup to harness new interest in our game.

Leading all other Member Federations with over 150 x 1 Star Rated Clubs within Victoria, and 200 Clubs undertaking the "Our Game" Women & Girls Development module, the Club Changer Program has seen substantial engagement, with over 250 Victorian Clubs actively embracing the system to enhance their operations. The overall goals of the Club Changer Program, as outlined by Football Australia, are to support clubs in achieving sustainability, enhancing their governance, fostering an inclusive and diverse culture, and ensuring a safe and enjoyable environment for all involved in the sport.

This national program and the support of the Growth & Development team FV aims to significantly elevate the quality of our community football experience – from best practice governance and management, to more on-field programming and better infrastructure – leading to an improved overall experience provided by our clubs, fostering greater recruitment and retention of players and a stronger football community.





## Grievance, Disciplinary and Tribunal

# A SURGE IN PENALTIES

**The 2023 season can certainly be described as a busy one for the Grievance, Disciplinary and Tribunal department. In comparison with recent seasons, the total number of Red Cards, Yellow Cards and Misconduct Penalties issued has increased significantly.**

As a result, we have also seen a surge in the total amount of revenue generated from fines and penalties to \$369,452 - a 43% increase on 2022. Changes made to the GDT for the 2023 season such as the rise in penalty unit amount to \$110 account for this to some degree, though a further 480 additional Red Cards shown to players (when compared to 2022) is also a contributing factor.

A concerning trend amongst the increase in Red Card and Misconduct Penalty numbers is that the number of offences against Match Officials is disproportionately high. Combatting this trend will be an area of focus for the department in the next year, which is of particular importance as the total number of Match Officials registered to FV is on an upward trend.



## +43%

### INCREASE ON 2022

**\$369,452 Fines & Penalties**  
Rise in penalty unit to \$110 for 2023

**480 Additional Red Cards**  
When compared to 2022

Code	Description	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	# Change	% Change
R1	DOGSO - Handball	47	44	67	48	61	13	27%
R2	DOGSO - Foul Play	102	108	146	134	167	33	25%
R3	Serious Foul Play	131	150	156	114	176	62	54%
R4	Spitting at Opponent	6	5	11	5	6	1	20%
R5	Violent Conduct	352	342	325	273	380	107	39%
R6	Offensive, Insulting or Abusive Language and/or Gestures	84	110	141	87	153	66	76%
R7	Receives a Second Caution	591	692	653	613	759	146	24%
R8	Offences Against Match Officials	189	150	104	117	169	52	44%
Total		1502	1601	1603	1391	1871	480	35%



2023 saw the introduction of Yellow Card accumulation suspensions in Junior NPL Competitions, with close to 400 separate penalties issued. It was hoped that the introduction of this ruling has improved the playing experience and brought a sense of accountability for young players. Junior NPL participants accounted for 37% of the total number of suspensions issued for this type of offence. Possibly the only reduction seen in comparison to the 2022 season was the total number of Tribunals held, which was 41 (9 fewer than in the previous year). It is hoped that this is because of a higher quality investigation process, made possible by an increased level of resource in the Legal & Integrity department.

Another tangible impact of this resource increase is the fact that over 400 separate investigations into misconduct were able to be carried out, along with a further 60 low-level complaints resolved via informal communication with Clubs. This demonstrates a number of important benefits – that victims of abuse are confident that FV will take action where misconduct is reported, that Clubs and individuals are held accountable for their behaviour and that the football environment in Victoria is an increasingly safe one.

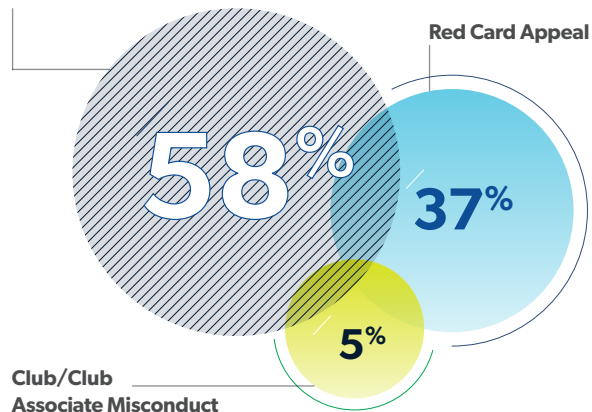
Aside from the trend of negative behaviour towards Match Officials, the increased level of scrutiny applied to Clubs has also discovered an unwelcome decrease in the standard of behaviour displayed on the sidelines by spectators. Fighting this slip in standards will form the second area of focus for the upcoming season.

## Tribunal

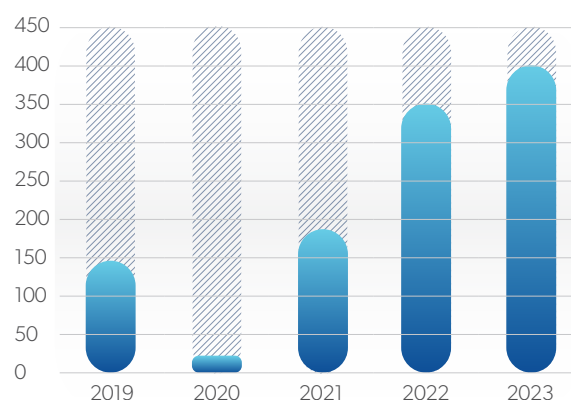
### What type of case was heard

#### Appeal Against

#### Tribunal Determination



## Number of Investigations







# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

