



The Principal Research Officer
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly Committee Office
4 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

Friday 31st July 2020

Attention: Dr Alan Charlton

The Claremont Football Club is key stakeholder in WA Football and we have heavily invested, and been a part of grassroots football in this state for nearly a decade. A strong game is a strong community, so it is in every West Australians interest to maximise the impact of the resources at our disposal.

It is widely recognised that the zoned model of football in Western Australia is a nation-wide leader. The key piece of scaffolding within this model has football development financially resourced and governed by the WAFC but administered through the WAFL clubs to ensure a bespoke delivery that caters for the specific demographic, cultural and historical factors that shape that district. Over recent years the WAFC has gone away from this with their current structure, centralising football development staff and combining district football administration with multiple districts.

It is our clubs belief that this shift has created a substantial disconnect whereby a lack of accountability to the game has resulted in diminished coaching, skill development and social outcomes.

The talent pathway now appears to be driven by AFL goals (players drafted) whereas players getting drafted should be a result of the work in developing people to their capacity – not the aim. This is another area where the current centralised structure, offering a single standardised approach despite the differences in districts and the accompanying challenges they face, has hampered the advancement of the game. Although only becoming centralised in the last two years, spending in the area of talent have skyrocketed – namely through state academy programs. It is our belief that this level of investment in the state academy programs is unwarranted and redirecting funds to grassroots football would better serve the game.



So, where to from here? We feel solutions can come in the following areas;

DELIVERY

To move forward and address the issues outlined above, we believe the WAFC must decentralise but appropriately resource district football development, talent and engagement. WAFL clubs can play this critical role as both a community service provider and an integral part of the talent pathway. A WAFL club is motivated to improve the levels of participation as more people playing football means a greater talent pool and a more connected community. The social and health benefits for individuals in the community as a result of their engagement in the game and clubs is then almost a by-product.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The WAFL clubs should work with the WAFC to develop and set strict KPIs that relate to their resourcing and district & talent outcomes. The Clubs and WAFC should then again work together to deliver these; the WAFC as a governance and strategic mentor, not a service and delivery provider working in isolation, or in some cases currently, duplication.

SAVINGS

The current WAFC staffing structure appears bloated and inefficient in providing direct contact with football stakeholders. Instead of multiple central management tiers which they currently have, money can be saved and better directed to achieve tangible benefits to the people playing, coaching and supporting the game at the grassroots level.

We understand any recalibration constitutes a considerable piece of work but feel under the right management, football, and the WAFC, will again set the example for sport governance in WA. We appreciate the opportunity to share our feedback.

Kind Regards,

Darcy Coffey (on behalf of the CFC Board)
Chief Executive Officer
Claremont Football Club