



Western Australian Government

Public Accounts Committee

WEST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COMMISSION INQUIRY

Friday 31th July 2020

The following information is provided after consultation with each of the WACFL Board Members and stakeholders. It is deliberately laid out in this format as it captures the views

HOW EFFECTIVELY STATE FUNDS HAVE BEEN USED TO DEVELOP FOOTBALL ACROSS ALL LEVELS

The relationship with WAFC has never been stronger. WACFL now has representation on the WAFC Executive and this structure has been in place for 12 months, which has seen a genuine partnership evolving.

Our observation is that the current football funding model has been severely affected by COVID-19 and should be reviewed and expanded into the regional football leagues (Junior and Senior).

Mental Health initiatives are very well supported by the WACFL and its member leagues. A stronger focus in leagues that have been unable to restart their seasons in 2020 will be important due to the value of football to the mental health and wellbeing of regional communities.

WHETHER THE WAFC IS MEETING ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE?

WACFL has seen no evidence of the WAFC not meeting its financial obligations to Country Football. WAFC regional staff assist regional football from Auskick through to seniors

THE EFFECTIVENESS AND TRANSPARENCY OF MONITORING AND REPORTING FUNCTIONS INCLUDED IN THE STATES FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE WAFC

WACFL is not in a position to comment directly on this question, not being privy to the requirements.

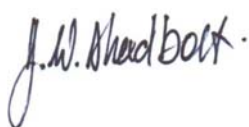
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AS A KEY PARTNER OF THE WAFC

- Football is more than a Game" it means so much more to our communities. With population decline in the regions the volunteer numbers are declining with it.
- The WACFL is a separately constituted body working in concert with the WAFC. Although there is a healthy relationship there needs to be a closer link to the WAFC Commissioners which could be that a Commissioner be assigned the WACFL portfolio and maybe the chance of a WACFL Director being able to sit in on WAFC Commission meetings.
- Streamline Governance to take pressure off volunteers. E.g. Review the RFDC system and streamline the underage Football Development through the Regional Managers and the Leagues.
- Governance of Leagues: The Club Delegate system, which divides ownership of decision making should be changed to an independent Directorship Model. This would simplify League Governance and take pressure off volunteers.
- Talent programs and the identification of talent is lacking in the regions. The current talent identification programs need to be reviewed and changed to suit the current demographics
- Football being too insular in its thinking and actions around the role it plays in our society. Personal development versus Talent development
- The need to look at the disadvantage that Indigenous participants have due to their 'lived life experiences' and how football recognizes this and then can be seen to be a positive influence in assisting rectify it
- Talent production line focus in the state and national level of governance of football. More focus on grassroots participation from Auskick to Masters
This will always ensure the most money and resources are invested in the smallest number of participants thus limiting the growth of the industry. Trickle down is proven not to work effectively anywhere
- The impact of the emergence of women's football on existing capabilities such as lack of infrastructure, competition structures, pathways and resources to adequately deal with this. Solution – Improve strategic planning models to include other stakeholders buy in e.g. local government, schools, Clontarf, Girls Academies etc. WAFC's new Strategic Facilities Plan commences this process and is a valuable document.
- An aging population of volunteers and the lack of replacement younger people to take their place. Instead of promoting and spending so much money on the elite end of football, target programs and resources that will encourage people to be involved in the 'clubs' and community buy in.
- Resources are relatively thin in the regions. As an example there is one staff member in the Kimberley region. This is 450,000sqkm of territory. More equitable funding across the industry is required.
- Football's relevance to Country communities is very important to the general health of all communities.
- Programs such as Belt Up, Think Mental Health and other messages run through Football are very important to all people in our communities not just Footballers.
- There is strong support from Local Governments to promote Football (Sport) because of the influence Football has had in promoting Health and Welfare messages.
- Football competition and participation [especially with the emergence of women's football] has the capacity to be a major motivator and unifier within most communities.

- The ongoing discussions in regard to a more streamlined and coordinated governance model that better represents the country regions and their needs and aspirations and allows for better servicing.
- An open-minded approach to the sharing of football resources to promote community development starting to appear
- Don't use the term or concept of 'outsourcing' as its used in contemporary sense. It becomes a profit and loss exercise that the recipients of the service always lose because its always looked at through that lens. The concept should be how football can encourage co investment in what it wants to achieve because it has a product that is worthwhile investing in to get outcomes for others. e.g. attract mental health \$'s by partnering up football outcomes with mental health outcomes. Have scenarios where shared KPI can be achieved. Partner up with community-based organizations that have similar objectives that football can help achieve. Eg Garnduwa and the WAFC in the Kimberley
- Ensure through appropriate strategic planning due diligence and input that the governance of any partnering/collaboration is adequate, has ongoing review and preview capacity and a way to ensure the integrity of the partners outcomes are not being compromised. Ie make the partnerships sustainable.
- Encourage the AFL to also buy into the 'community development' program with its brand and resource pulling ability so the concept of football is 'more than a game' and not just being football for football as is promoted across the industry
- WAFL and their zoned regional league MOU's are not governed strongly enough. These documents have been tokenistic in the past and better contract management (plus a realistic suite of benefits for both parties) is a priority.
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- Encourage the AFL to also buy into the 'community development' program with its brand and resource pulling ability so the concept of football is 'more than a game' and not just being football for football is promoted across the industry
- Number of regional senior clubs with a set % of locally produced players
- Number of total participants – Auskick, Youth, Senior, volunteers and umpires. Year-on-year growth.

On behalf the West Australian Country Football League Board, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input and to contribute to the future planning of football in WA. We trust the information above provides the PAC with a solid background of the partnership with WAFC and the operations of the WACFL.

Your sincerely,



John Shadbolt

(President)

