

# Review into Junior Football in Tasmania

Football Federation Tasmania

May 2016

# Executive Summary

This report represents the first comprehensive description of how junior football is run within Tasmania, as well as providing a snapshot of the structure and costs for other football jurisdictions within Australia.

The review was commissioned by the Board of Football Federation Tasmania.

As defined by the Terms of Reference, core elements were to:

- ▶ Review the current structure of junior football and identify the variations across the State and determine their suitability for the administration of the game.
- ▶ Identify the costs involved for participants in the various regions and at various levels as well as the costs of providing the services.
- ▶ Determine the availability of suitable infrastructure for the junior game.
- ▶ Understand the demands made upon volunteers, parents, teachers etc. to support the participants.

The review was launched in May 2015 and meetings were held from May through to November. These meetings engaged more than 40 associations, clubs, schools and government and local authorities.

The approach adopted was to consult widely with key stakeholders both within and also outside the game to provide an accurate position on the state of Junior Football with the goal of making recommendations based on the information gathered.

Consultations were held with administrators of junior associations, parents of current players, coaches at all levels, Presidents of senior clubs that engage with junior football, relevant State Government authorities, other sporting organisations, bodies and associations, relevant Local Government authorities and school communities as appropriate.

The key findings can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ There isn't currently a one-size-fits-all model for junior football within Tasmania and it may well be that this is appropriate when taking into account regional variations. There is currently little appetite among the junior associations for significant structural change.
- ▶ There is a clearly defined drop-off of players at around 12 years old coinciding with the change from junior competition to club football as well as the transition from primary school to high school education. This expresses itself in the statistic that overall each year the same number of players stop playing at age 12 as commence the sport at age 6. The regional exception to this drop-off at age 12 is in Launceston where players remain in their junior clubs for a much longer period.
- ▶ Availability of suitable playing facilities is a big issue in the south of the state. The success of the Churchill Park hub in Launceston is proof of how valuable an all-weather junior precinct such as that planned for Cambridge can be.
- ▶ The links between senior clubs and junior associations/clubs need to be significantly strengthened. There is the opportunity for senior clubs to take a leadership role in player retention and ensuring that all players who are disposed to continuing in the sport beyond age 12 have the opportunity and are directly/personally encouraged to do so.
- ▶ There has been a strong focus on keeping participation costs low across all junior associations and registration fees were not seen as a barrier to playing. On the whole, the junior associations appear to be currently well-run, profitable and have appropriate cash reserves. Most associations re-invest their funds into equipment, coach education, ground subsidies and reducing player registration fees.

# Executive Summary

The number of players participating in junior Tasmanian competitions has been consistent on a year-by-year basis.

The area of biggest potential growth is in women's football and this is particularly true at the younger levels. There is an opportunity in this area to develop competitions and pathways more suited to the expansion of female numbers and their retention.

There is opportunity for and a need to improve engagement with schools.

As outlined in Section 15 'Findings and Recommendations', a series of actions have been identified with respect to outstanding issues identified in the Review.

The approach to addressing issues in each of the areas will be to resolve them separately rather than revisiting big-picture discussions which have already occurred. FFT will engage with key stakeholders and provide them a further opportunity to make a tangible contribution to the various deliverables and action items. The intention is to tackle specific issues in selected regions rather than having widespread forums on multiple subjects. To that extent, this review is seen as contributing to an ongoing journey rather than a destination in itself.

The report is intended to be distributed widely for the consideration of everyone in the broader football community as well as those more generally involved in sport in Tasmania.

Any feedback is welcomed - see [www.footballfedtas.com.au](http://www.footballfedtas.com.au) for contact details.

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# Introduction

## Chapter One

***To maintain a vibrant, dynamic junior level of participation in our game...***

# Introduction

The Football Federation of Tasmania has overall responsibility for the conduct of football at all levels in the State. There are over 7,500 Under 12 children throughout the season and the stakeholder number grows with the addition of parents, family, volunteers etc.

The game is growing strongly in Australia but is perceived to be constrained in Tasmania due to a number of factors. Previous factors considered to be significant in this regard include the lack of facilities for juniors, too few pitches to play on, poor quality pitches resulting in a high proportion of game cancellations due to weather, lack of adequate change rooms and no shelter for spectators and so on.

There are ongoing concerns that the 'drop off' in participation rates from the junior level to the adolescent level is a constraint on the development of the game.

The failure of facilities to grow to meet demand has been considered to act as a disincentive for the entry of new participants and their families.

The different regions of the State operate their management/administration of junior football in different ways. These have been largely successful over the years but questions have been raised about the sustainability of each model. This is compounded by the other changes in the game including the engagement with senior clubs and the introduction of coaching academies.

To maintain a vibrant, dynamic junior level of participation in our game and to provide a higher level of satisfaction for all participants it is appropriate to review all of the issues that are acting as either positive to the experience or negatives. To this end, in February 2015, Football Federation Tasmania decided to undertake a comprehensive investigation and established a review panel comprising predominantly of the CEO and President to consult widely with all levels of the game that impact on the delivery of junior football in Tasmania.

In addition the panel was charged with identifying opportunities to improve participation, review structures, costs, infrastructure and other matters relevant to junior football in Tasmania.



# A very very brief history

- ▶ The first junior football match in Tasmania was played on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1910 between St Luke's Catholic School and MacQuarie Street State School who, interestingly, are now South Hobart Primary.
- ▶ In 1914 the Association set-up Division 3 for teams Under 16 years of age and they played for the Honeysett Shield. A trophy that was still being competed for in the 1970's.
- ▶ In the 1970's and 1980's virtually all primary schools had a team and students then left primary school and the more talented played for high schools.
- ▶ Many high school players also played for clubs and there were competitions that featured both club and school teams. Ultimately most clubs were too strong for schools and some schools stopped playing.
- ▶ A change in the roles of teachers and a reduction in their time spent teaching sport after school led to the end of highly competitive inter-primary and inter-high school sports.
- ▶ Participation numbers at junior level boomed in the 2000's and have remained solid ever since.

# Terms of Reference

Chapter Two

***Opportunities to enhance and grow participation...***

# Terms of Reference

In August 2014, the Board of FFT approved the terms of reference and determined that the review shall be undertaken within the following terms of reference. The Review Panel (“the Panel”) shall:

Enquire into the conduct and operation of junior football in Tasmania, at all levels, to determine the positive features that encourage and maintain participation and those negative features that adversely impact on the participation or enjoyment of the game by those involved in this age demographic.

By the end of September 2015, provide an interim report to the Board of Football Federation Tasmania identifying the proposed plan for progress and a timeline.

The Panel shall:

Review all the available research relating to the provision of junior football in Australia as it relates to Tasmania including that undertaken nationally by Football Federation Australia (FFA) and locally by Football Federation Tasmania (FFT)

Identify an appropriate mechanism which enables them to consult widely across the State (e.g. face to face meetings, online surveys, focus groups etc.) with those involved in the delivery of junior football at all levels, including, (but not exclusively).

- ▶ administrators of junior associations,
- ▶ parents of current players,
- ▶ coaches at all levels,
- ▶ President’s of senior clubs that engage with junior football,
- ▶ relevant State Government authorities,
- ▶ other sporting organisations, bodies and associations
- ▶ relevant Local Government authorities
- ▶ school communities as appropriate
- ▶ past participants/parents (to identify reasons for non-continuance)

## The Panel shall consider:

- ▶ The current structure of junior football and identify the variations across the State and determine their suitability for the administration of the game.
- ▶ The costs involved for participants in the various regions and at various levels as well as the costs of providing the services.
- ▶ The availability of suitable infrastructure for the junior game
- ▶ The demands made upon volunteers, parents, teachers etc. to support the participants

## Outcomes:

It is expected that the Panel will provide recommendations as to:

- ▶ The ‘best’ structure or structures for junior football in Tasmania;
- ▶ Opportunities to enhance and grow participation;
- ▶ The costs of participation for juniors;
- ▶ Development of available infrastructure for junior football; and
- ▶ and any other matter that they think fit.

*It is important to note that throughout the document the opinions of many people have been sought and recorded on an at “face-value” basis. There are plenty of comments that refer to the quality of organisation or competitions within associations or the strength of clubs, etc. As part of the review there has not necessarily been an attempt to quantify or check every statement that has been made, rather to simply record and reflect the personal views of those who gave their time to participate in this review.*

# Process

## Chapter Three

***Identify specific achievable goals and action...***

# Process

The overall process as defined in conjunction with the Terms of Reference is as follows:

- ▶ Understand and be guided by the Terms of Reference
- ▶ Interview key stakeholders
- ▶ Meet with Junior Associations
- ▶ Talk to parents and players
- ▶ Engage with Government and authorities
- ▶ Review the structure, composition and operation of other junior sports to gauge best practice approaches that may be readily applied to football in Tasmania
- ▶ Produce a preliminary report
- ▶ Reach a final position and identify specific achievable goals and actions



The process was divided into a number of segments to allow for the efficient gathering of information and supporting data, as follows:

- ▶ Introductory Association Meetings
- ▶ Full Association Meetings
- ▶ Sport & Recreation Meeting
- ▶ Local Council Meetings
- ▶ Forums with clubs, schools and interested persons
- ▶ Development of data - registrations, costs, etc.
- ▶ Discussions with other sporting bodies/groups in Tasmania
- ▶ Production of a Preliminary Report for Football Federation Tasmania Board - September 2015

- ▶ Launch: Junior Review
- ▶ Date: Friday, 15 May 2015
- ▶ Time: 2.00pm-2.30pm
- ▶ Location: Campbell Street Primary School
- ▶ Event: Media opportunity plus MiniRoos Clinic
- ▶ FFT President: Sean Collins
- ▶ Guest: Guy Barnett, Parliamentary Secretary



## A-LEAGUE GRAND FINAL



**MELBOURNE VICTORY**  
V  
**SYDNEY FC**

at AAMI Park 4pm tomorrow

**HEAD TO HEAD**

Melbourne Victory 10,  
Sydney 7,  
drawn 17

**LAST CLASH**

Round 17 2014-2015 - Sydney 3 drew  
Melbourne Victory 3  
at Allianz Stadium  
Tel: Sportsbet, Melbourne Victory \$2.15,  
Sydney \$1.30, Draw \$1.40

**SYDNEY FC**

(Daily line-up)

**Goalkeeper:** Vedran  
**Right-back:** Sebastian Ryall  
**Centre-back:** Matthew Jurman  
**Centre-back:** Jacques Faty  
**Left-back:** Nikola Petrovic  
**Central midfielders:** Michael  
Tavarez  
**Attacking midfielder:** Milos  
Dimitrijevic  
**Right-wing:** Bernie Ibini  
**Left-wing:** Christopher Naumoff  
**Striker:** Marc Janko  
**Striker:** Alex Brosque  
**Bench:** Ivan Neceviski, Shane  
Smeltz, Terry Antonis, Rhyen Grant,  
Robert Stamboliev

**MELBOURNE VICTORY**

(Daily line-up)

**Goalkeeper:** Lawrence Thomas  
**Right-back:** Leigh Brotham  
**Centre-back:** Matthew Delapierre  
**Centre-back:** Nick Ansell  
**Left-back:** Daniel Georgievski  
**Centre midfield:** Mark Milligan  
**Centre midfield:** Carl Valeri  
**Attacking midfield:** Gai Finkler  
**Left wing:** Fahid Ben Khalfallah  
**Right wing:** Kosta Barbarouses  
**Striker:** Besart Berisha  
**Bench:** Michael Tumbull, Archie  
Thompson, Jason Geria, Rashid  
Mahazi, Connor Pain

**STARS ALIGN:** Sydney FC's Alex Brosque  
chases Victory's Mark Milligan.  
Picture: GEORGE SALUNCIOS

# Sydney hold the extra edge in likely deadlock

ANGELA HABASHY

IF tomorrow's A-League grand final goes to extra-time Sydney FC could have an edge over Melbourne Victory, Sky Blues utility Rhyen Grant says.

With so little between the league's top two teams, which costed draws in all three en-

tiping a replay of their last grand final clash in 2010 that ended in penalties with Sydney the victor.

Grant, who is likely to be on the bench for the AAMI Park blockbuster, says the work highly-rated strength and conditioning coach Andrew Clark had done with Sydney's squad

then have to go into such a nerve-racking penalty shoot-out time," Grant said.

"But the boys will be ready. I'd like to think we'd have the edge. Clarke is a freak at what he does.

"We've got full trust in him to make sure we're ready to go and if it does go to extra-time

ties in its last two sessions. More than fitness however, Grant felt defence would prove the difference.

The two sides have the best attacks in the league with Victory boasting the likes of Besart Berisha, Fahid Ben Khalfallah, Gai Finkler and Kosta Barbarouses with Archie

Smeltz ready to come on if needed.

With so much firepower in the front thirds, Grant said it would likely come down to which backline remained the most resolute. "I think in a grand final it may be little bit reserved anyway but as the game goes on I think it will

## FFT push to keep juniors onside

JAMES BRESNAN

IT'S a question all sports ask and Football Federation Tasmania is about to try to answer — how to retain more junior players.

Soccer has 13,000 registered players in Tasmania and with 75 per cent of those in juniors, FFT wants more to progress into youth and senior ranks.

FFT went to Campbell St Primary to launch its six-month comprehensive review into the structure and future of junior football, with a particular focus on player retention.

FFT president Sean Collins said the future of junior football was a key priority.

"The junior game in Tasmania is the backbone of the sport and rightly needs to have more exposure and a more significant place in the landscape," Collins said.

"A lot of the focus has traditionally been on senior football and, rightfully, the establishment of the Victory League.

"However, it is time for FFT



to provide further support for the junior game in Tasmania."

FFT is determined to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of junior football as well as working towards better retention of players into youth and senior football.

"A lot of hard work has been done by a wide range of volunteers over a long period of time and we want to recognise those efforts and understand how the sport as a whole can support the growth and development of the junior game," Collins said.

"FFT will conduct a review over the next six months, with a view to implementing the key findings for the 2016 season."

The review will involve public forums, online surveys, interviews and meetings with key stakeholders as well as research from other states and other sports.

Collins said the review would be expensive, in order to seek the views of all involved with the junior game.

"The reason for a six-month

# Consultation

## Chapter Four

***Clubs, schools and organisations have been actively involved...***

# Consultation

The following associations, clubs, schools and organisations have been actively involved in the consultation process:

- ▶ Beachside Football Club
- ▶ Bellerive Junior Soccer Club
- ▶ Burnie United Football Club
- ▶ Central Region Junior Soccer Association
- ▶ Clarence United FC
- ▶ Derwent United
- ▶ Devonport Junior Soccer Association
- ▶ Eastern Region Junior Soccer Association
- ▶ Football Federation Tasmania Staff
- ▶ Glenorchy Knights Juniors
- ▶ Hobart Zebras Football Club
- ▶ Huon Valley
- ▶ Kingborough Lions United Football Club
- ▶ Launceston City Council
- ▶ Launceston United Football Club
- ▶ Launceston United Juniors
- ▶ Lenah Valley Primary School
- ▶ Lindisfarne Junior Soccer Club
- ▶ Meander Valley Council
- ▶ Montague Bay
- ▶ Mt Stuart Soccer
- ▶ Nelson Eastern Suburbs Football Club
- ▶ North Launceston Eagles
- ▶ North West Football Participation Officer
- ▶ Northern Rangers Football Club
- ▶ Northern Rangers Junior Football Club

- ▶ Northern Suburbs Junior Soccer Association
- ▶ Northern Tasmania Junior Soccer Association
- ▶ Olympia Warriors FC Junior Program
- ▶ Port Sorell Primary School
- ▶ Princess St Primary School
- ▶ Riverside Olympic FC
- ▶ Riverside Olympic Junior Soccer Club
- ▶ Somerset Soccer Club
- ▶ Sorell Junior SC
- ▶ South East United FC
- ▶ South Hobart Football Club
- ▶ Southern FC
- ▶ Sport & Recreation Tasmania
- ▶ Taroona Primary Football Club

- ▶ Ulverstone Soccer Club
- ▶ West Hobart
- ▶ Western Schools Soccer Association
- ▶ Westside Devils Junior Soccer Club
- ▶ Womensport & Recreation Tasmania
- ▶ Additionally, parents/guardians were present at all forums and provided valuable feedback.



# Junior Sport

Chapter Five

***Quality growth of the sport at every level...***

# Junior Sport

The following section is predominantly a synopsis of information gathered from Sport & Recreation Tasmania (State Government entity) by the CEO FFT.

Junior sport in Tasmania is buoyant and strongly supported. It is Sport & Recreation Tasmania's view that an extremely high percentage of young people participate in sport-based activities either within the school environment or on weekends. It is a social activity for the community and not only provides exercise for juniors but also brings parents and family members together in a positive way.

In regard to the goals of this Junior Review there are a number of very interesting factors which impact participation and also influence the continuation of young players within sport. One of the key learnings is based on how the participants view the particular sport or activity they are undertaking.

There is a considered view that says in primary school in Tasmania, *soccer is not seen as a sport*. It is a play-date in the eyes of most children; a social activity and to a large extent there is no sport element.

If one accepts the above premise then it partly explains the significant drop-off in players following primary school. The argument goes that when children move to high school they "put their childish things behind them." This includes many of the activities, sports, interests and even social groups they previously had.

There has been a significant cultural shift in the way young people grow up particularly in this technology-driven world. There are more choices and the transition from primary school to high school is more stark than in the past. Children are exposed to more and grow up faster.

In the days when school sport was dominant and it was in fact the only way for young people to participate in sport, there was also a significant drop-off in participation levels from primary school to high school.

There were fewer sports and the child usually had to wait till Grade 5 or even Grade 6 to be able to be selected for the one primary school team in each sport. The younger ones simply had to wait until they were old enough to play with the "big kids". Now we start them earlier and younger.

It is also important to remember that multiple primary schools fed each high school and these high schools typically only had one team for each grade in each sport. The best players from the feeder-primary schools were selected for the high school teams. This was an institutionalised drop-off in participation levels, sometimes up to 75%-80% if four to five primary schools were associated with a single high school.

In one sense it is fortunate that this system no longer exists as it allows a lot more children to play sport for a longer period of time; often starting as young as 4-5 years old, when previously most would not have started organised sport until 10-11 years of age.

On the back of these current structures, there are two conundrums that need to be solved. The first is a *mantra* that "if you get them younger they will stay". This is simply not real. The whole issue is much more complicated than this and there is no evidence to suggest that this position is true.

The second is the nature and reality, or otherwise, of the infamous "cliff". *The cliff* is the term given to the drop off in participation levels that occurs between primary school and high school or principally with the age group from 12-13 years.

*The cliff* does exist and it exists in every single sport to one level or another across all of Australia. It is fascinating to consider that *the cliff* is responsible for around 55,000 players leaving soccer in New South Wales each season, at the completion of their primary school years.

If one subscribes to the idea that football is, through the eyes of young children, fundamentally not a sport but rather a social activity then it naturally follows that the majority will not continue to play once that first-phase of their school life has concluded.

On this basis, there is still a *cliff*, but that *cliff* only exists with those children that would be naturally pre-disposed to continue to play football into their high school years and beyond.

And this is where the real challenge in both understanding and corresponding action begins.

The drop-off as expressed by *the cliff* is only an issue if it harms senior clubs. It is recognised across Australia that if even a small percentage of players continued to participate over and above the current levels; most youth and senior clubs would not be able to cope with the influx.

This is best represented in Tasmania through the notion that if an additional 1,000 children could be encouraged to move into youth ranks and club football this would represent another 90 teams, 90 coaches, 45 matches and 45 referees. If the puzzle were truly solved and these increased numbers happened over consecutive years then club football could quite literally grind to a halt.

There are two answers:

- 1) Quality growth of the sport at every level
- 2) Identification of players that should be continuing in the sport and then quantifying those who do and those that do not...this is the true *cliff*.

To further understand the notion that many young children (and their parents) see junior sport as a finite activity limited to a specific period in their lives one need only look at the trend that is starting to appear in Little Athletics.

As outlined by Sport & Recreation Tasmania; for a long time Little Athletics has not only positioned itself as a sport but particularly as a social environment where young people could develop coordination and timing and improve their motor skills. Its success was effectively in preparing youngsters for life.

Increasingly, parents are turning to Gymnastics to provide the same experience for their young children. This is being driven particularly by girls who do not associate the gymnastic-based activities with actual sport and see the entire experience as more social. Gymnastics understand that a very small number will continue in the sport, but have positioned themselves to service this market well.

Gymnastics at this level is a series of fun activities and more and more they own this space.



It is clear that every sport in Australia is trying to address the various issues associated with participation and growth. In Tasmania there are a number of factors impacting increased participation and these are:

- ▶ Capacity - the sports' ability to support growth.
- ▶ Facilities - the sport's ability to source and provide sufficient playing surfaces.
- ▶ Quality - ultimately the overall quality of the offering has a significant impact on retention and participation.

Sport & Recreation Tasmania have indicated that:

- ▶ Netball Tasmania is virtually at capacity and is working with the State Government to develop additional indoor facilities in Geilston Bay.
- ▶ Cricket Tasmania is currently reviewing its programs and trying to simplify its sport for the very young and modify it for youth. Cricket still faces the problem of transitioning from short games for children to whole-day matches for adults.
- ▶ Hockey Tasmania is also currently conducting a Junior Assessment. The sport has experienced a growth in junior numbers but has found that senior clubs are not taking the additional players. Hockey have increased their business opportunities by booking AFL 9's matches at their facility but this has had a negative effect on pitch availability and participation growth for their own sport.

Anecdotally there are also some interesting stories which highlight a potential shift in thinking in regard to retention and growth.

Clarence Basketball has introduced a mentoring system where the younger teams train with the adult teams. A particularly good example is that the under 16's have an overlapping session with the seniors and this has led to greater club loyalty and has the added simple benefit of senior players knowing the names of the younger members of the club.

The CSIRO has reported that one of the drivers of *the cliff* is the desire of sports to take children from modified games that they have experienced through school and expecting them to want to play the adult game.

Netball has experienced some success in retention through the provision of social mixed competitions. This has filtered down into high school with the transition seeing girls playing socially; including the opportunity to play with their dads in some cases.

*The cliff* is there for competitions but other products could keep people playing and it is possible for sports to pick players up later through sports like Futsal and indoor cricket as examples.

Additionally, the whole pathway program seems to have been established to cater for players beginning at 4 years of age. This is a huge positive as it "grabs" the players for the sport at a young age; the corresponding negative for many is that by their high school years they have been playing the sport for a decade and they don't want to duplicate primary school; which was a point-in-time experience.

The reverse, of course, is with players that may want to start at 12 or beyond and have not played before. They almost fall into the category of "adult beginners" and it is debatable whether most sports and their pathways are set-up to take advantage of this potential group of "older" players.

## ► Schools

As briefly outlined there has been a significant shift away from school-based sport in the past three decades. In the view of Sport & Recreation Tasmania, there appears to be room for significant improvement in the coordination and management of high school sports across Tasmania. Any success at this level depends on the specific high school and also the enthusiasm of particular teachers around certain sports. There is no overall co-ordination. There is no requirement from the Education Department and any sport is predominately run by Physical Education Teachers usually with the support of a keen Principal.

In the opinion of Sport & Recreation Tasmania, the northern high schools are the best organised and there still remains some inter-school competitions. In football however, particularly in the north-west the high school competition is partly seen as a negative because it splits the players between school and club and in effect neither group has quite enough players for meaningful competitions.

They also believe that private schools are much more organised than public schools as there is a central employee within the Sports Association of Tasmanian Independent Schools (SATIS) who is responsible for the organisation of inter-school competitions.

At this stage, sport has moved past primary schools and now needs the appropriate structures and resources to meet the needs of high school students wishing to participate in sport. Given there is no true high school sports, it would fall to each sport to invest in a substantial competition. This would include the provision of resources for scheduling, coaching and refereeing as well as equipment.

Links would need to be created, with clubs allocated a specific high school. At this level, there appears to be no point in simply having the sport as a social occasion or a time-limited school activity, but rather there needs to be a distinct and direct player pathway between high school and club.



As a summary of the discussions held with various individuals and groups regarding Junior Sport, the consensus seems to be that the steps forward are to ensure:

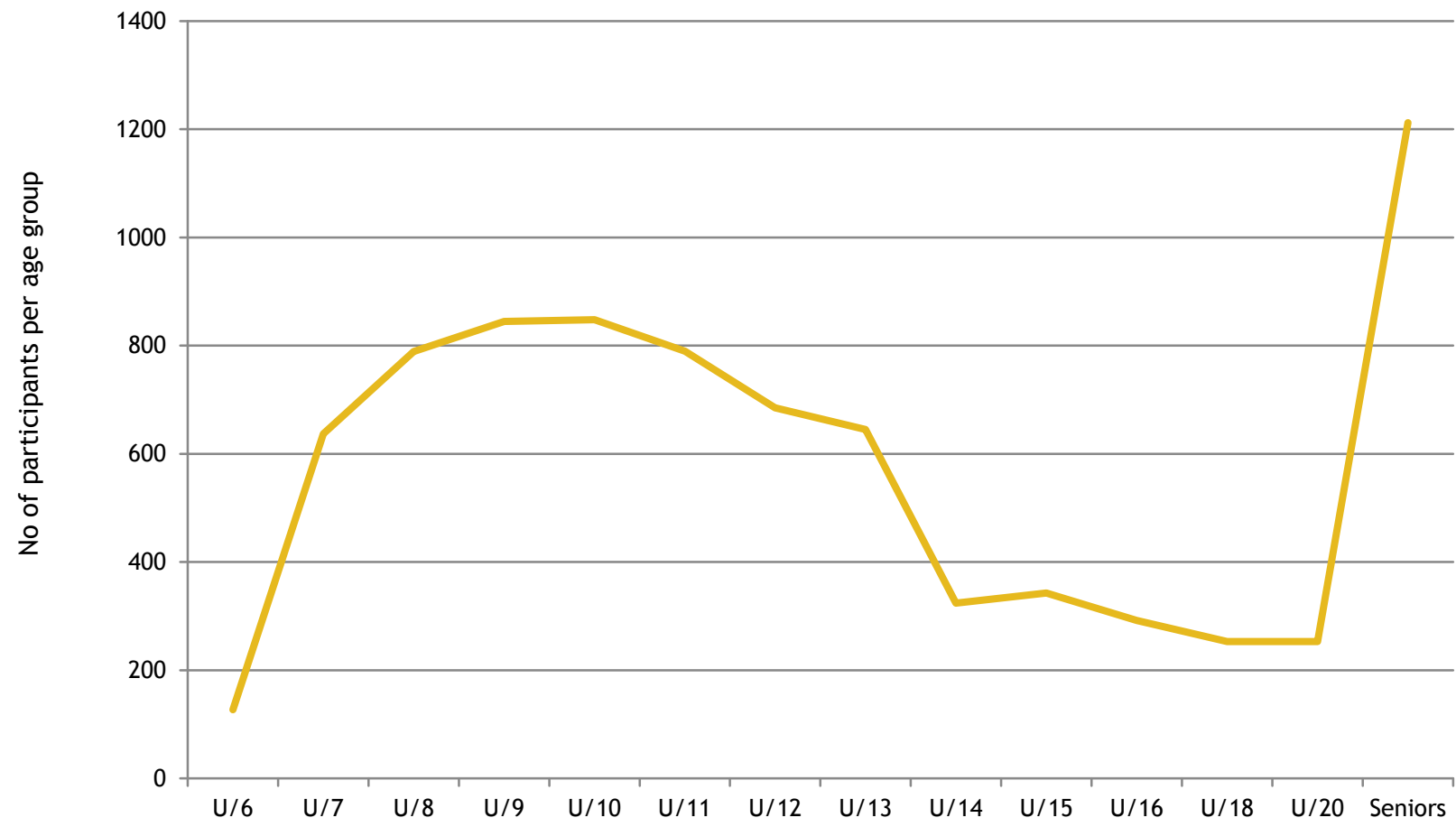
- ▶ A product to retain players.
- ▶ A young leaders program for players.
- ▶ The capacity to be able to provide a suitable environment and playing experience for all those who wish to continue to play regardless of standard.
- ▶ A clear offer for young players that is enticing and easy to understand for parents.
- ▶ The ability to maximise opportunities across the sport at this level.
- ▶ A full understanding about *exactly* who are we focussed on and not a widespread view about participation, retention and *the cliff*.
- ▶ The facilities necessary to drive growth.

These points are further addressed in the summary section and have been included in the actions and outcomes.



*The following three slides are designed to highlight the cliff as it exists across the three regions of Tasmania. These slides are divided by age group and on the vertical axis is the number of registered players. It is evident in the south and north-west that there is a substantial drop off in the region of under 12's and 13's; whereas in the north the overall drop-off is more progressive through these age groups as children continue to play within the junior association to under 16's. Also the large spike to seniors is slightly misleading as it doesn't reflect a sudden pick-up in registrations but rather quantifies the numbers playing in the many open age groups. It is theoretically not relevant to these three charts but has been left in for information purposes only.*

# Southern Tasmania

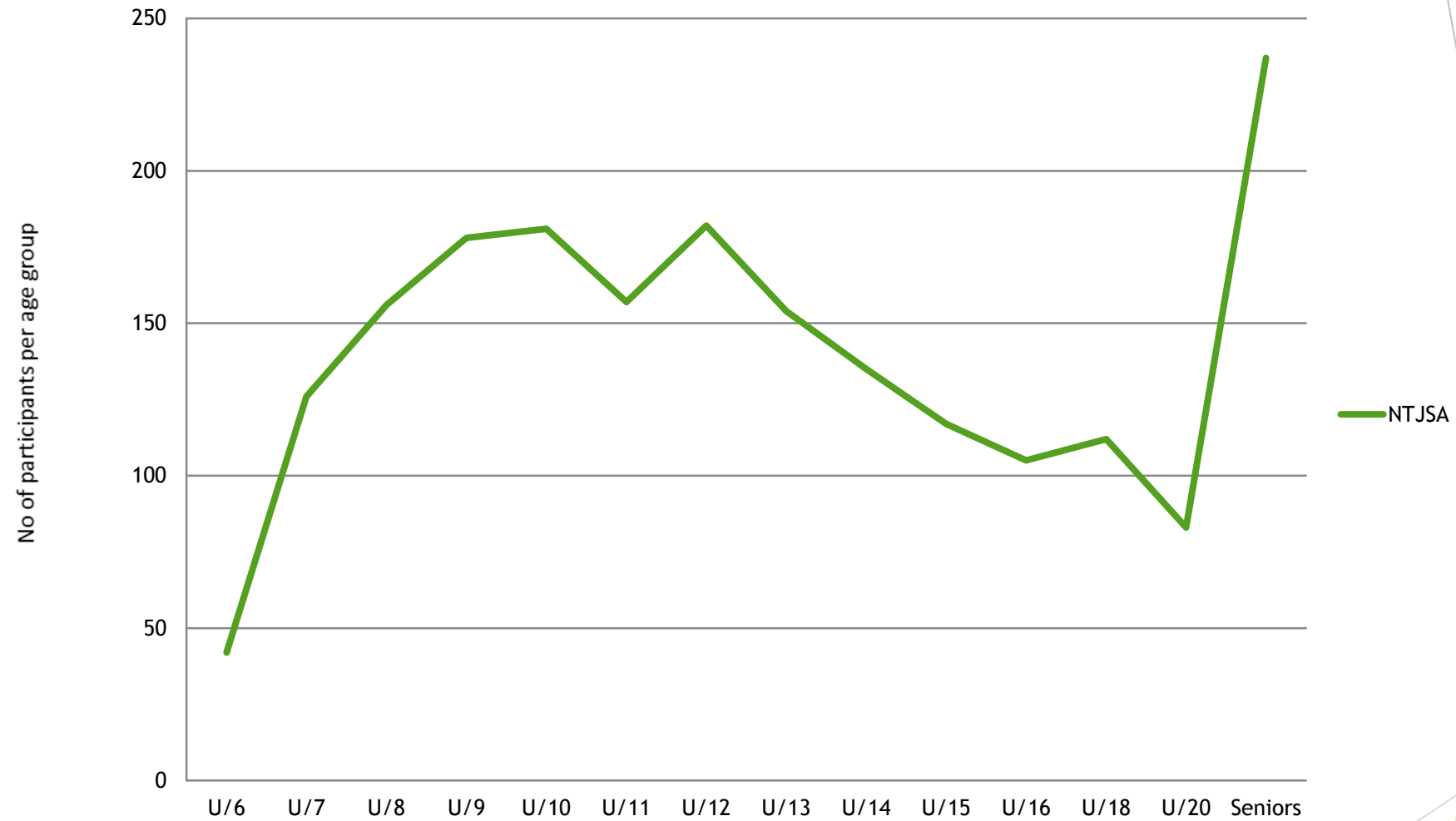


*Age of Participation in football in Tasmania (females and males combined)*

## North West Tasmania



## NTJSA



*Age of Participation in football in Tasmania (females and males combined)*

# Statistics

## Chapter Six

## STATISTICS:

The following charts demonstrate the number of registered players across Australia in the Under 6 to Under 12 age groups. This demonstrates the dominance of NSW (including Northern New South Wales) in terms of participation numbers.

In regard to Tasmanian registration numbers there has been a general levelling-out over the past three years with most numbers remaining steady. In 2014 we saw an increase of 165 players over the previous year and then in 2015 this reduced by 90 players. The net increase over the past three-year period is 75 players in the junior age groups across the entire State of Tasmania.

# 2014 Participation Numbers by State

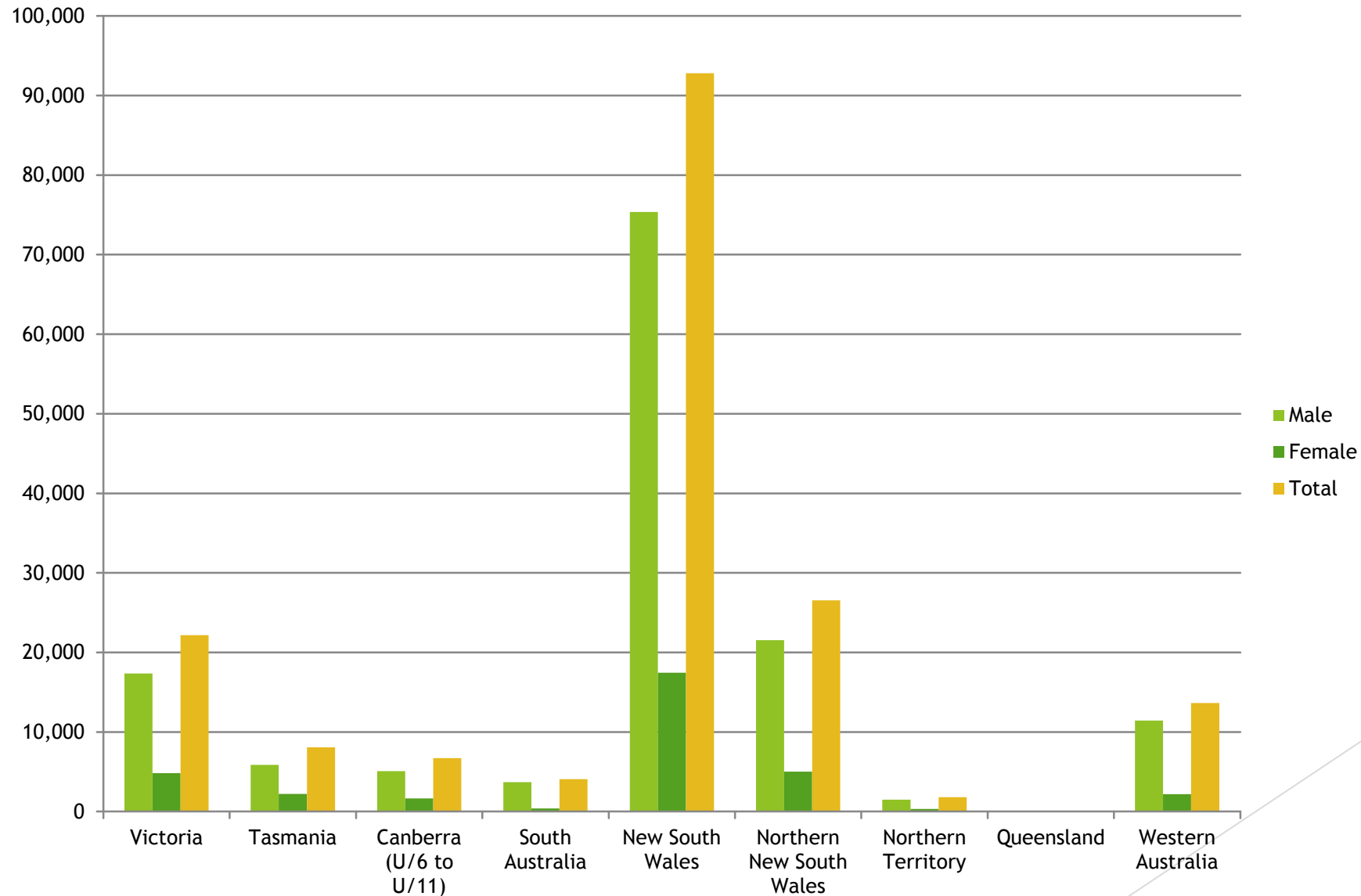
Under 6 to Under 12

State	Male	Female	Total
Victoria	17,368	4,815	22,183
<b>Tasmania</b>	<b>5,857</b>	<b>2,208</b>	<b>8,065</b>
Canberra (U/6 to U/11)	5,069	1,642	6,711
South Australia	3,692	390	4,082
New South Wales	75,349	17,460	92,809
Northern New South Wales	21,534	5,004	26,538
Northern Territory	1,492	326	1,818
Queensland*			
Western Australia	11,444	2,182	13626

*\*Numbers from Queensland were not readily available. The chart on the following page is a graphical representation of the table above.*

# 2014 Participation Numbers by State

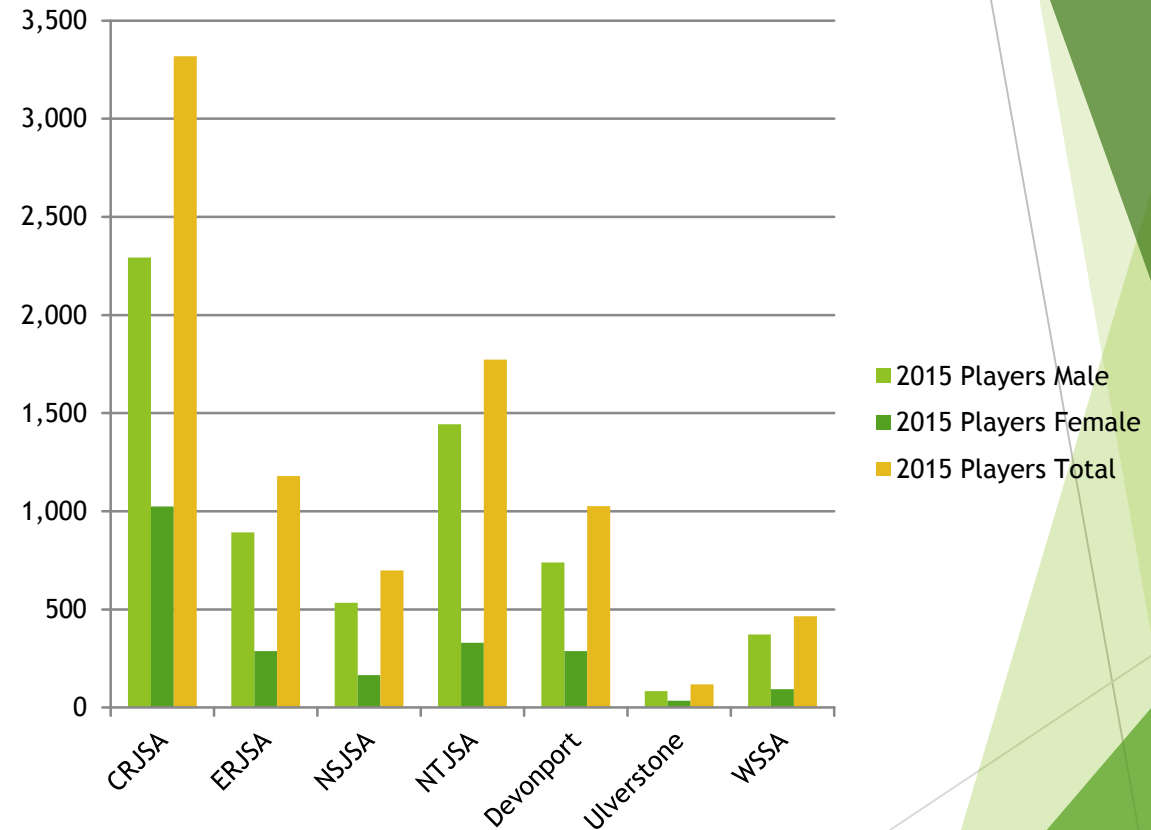
Under 6 to Under 12



# 2015 Participation Numbers by Association

Under 6 to Under 12

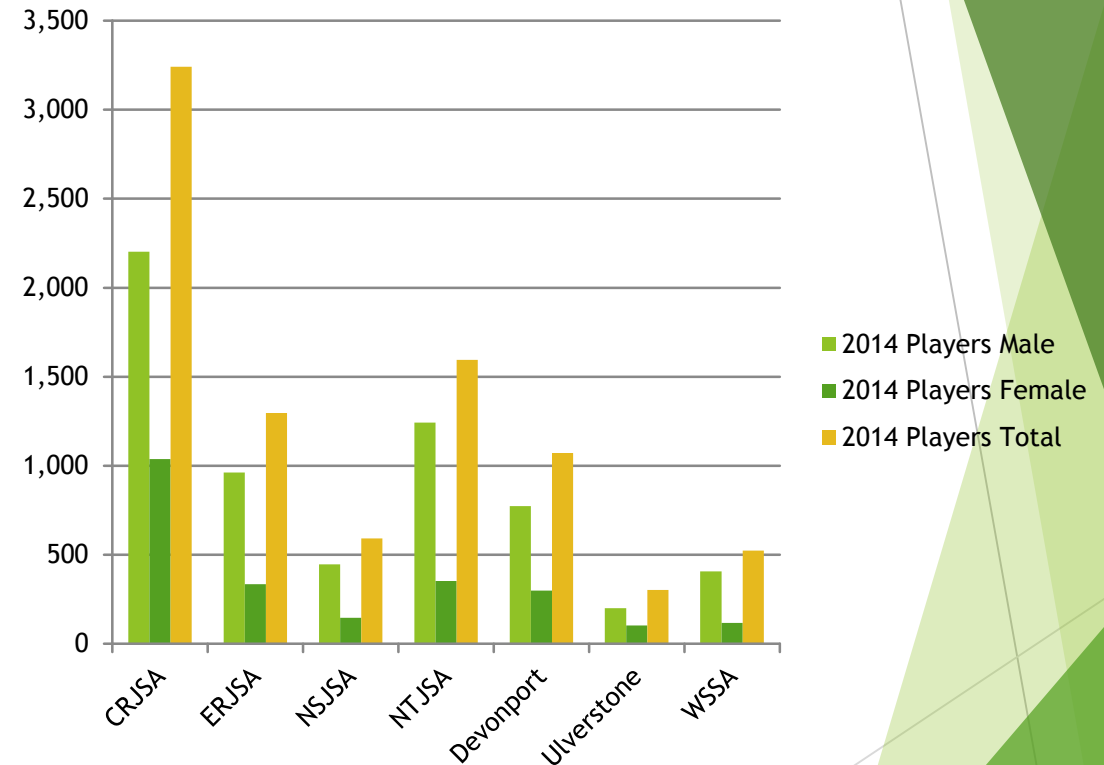
Players	Male	Female	Total
CRJSA	2,293	1,025	3,318
ERJSA	892	288	1,180
NSJSA	534	165	699
NTJSA	1,443	330	1,773
Devonport	739	287	1,026
Ulverstone*	83	35	118
WSSA	372	94	466
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,356</b>	<b>2,224</b>	<b>8,580</b>



# 2014 Participation Numbers by Association Under 6 to Under 12

Players	Male	Female	Total
CRJSA	2,203	1,038	3,241
ERJSA	962	335	1,297
NSJSA	445	146	591
NTJSA	1,243	352	1,595
Devonport	773	298	1,071
Ulverstone*	199	103	302
WSSA	406	117	523

<b>Total</b>	<b>6,231</b>	<b>2,439</b>	<b>8,670</b>
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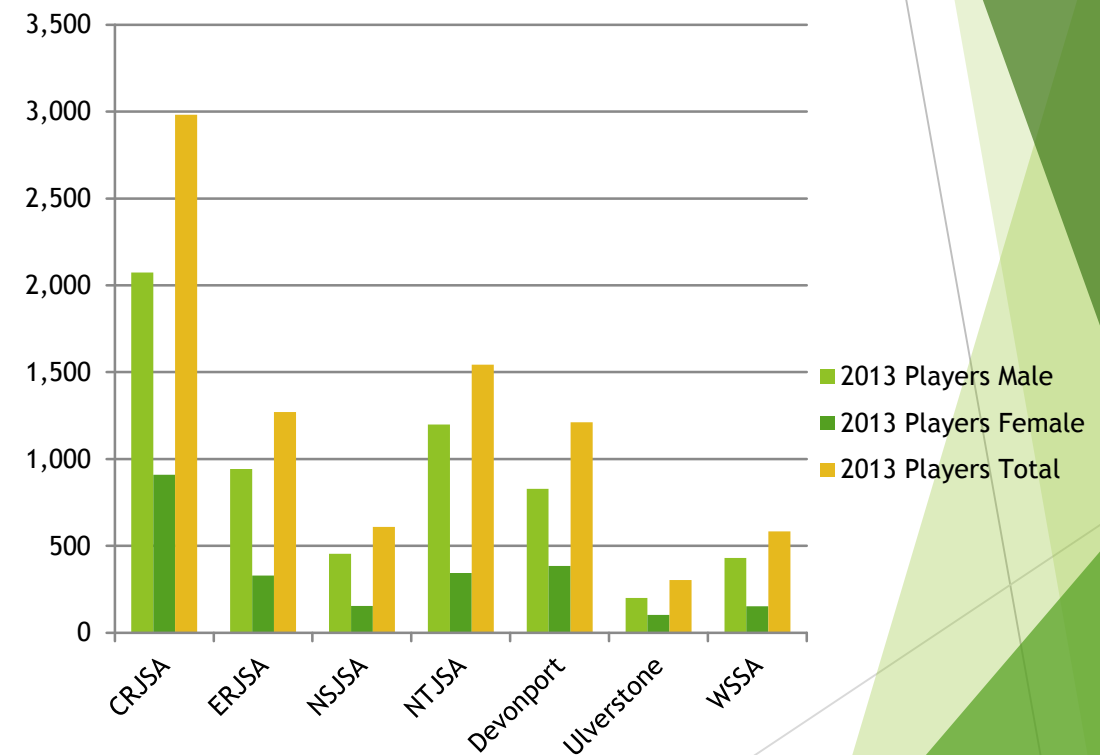


# 2013 Participation Numbers by Association

Under 6 to Under 12

Players	Male	Female	Total
CRJSA	2,073	909	2,982
ERJSA	942	329	1,271
NSJSA	454	155	609
NTJSA	1,198	345	1,543
Devonport	828	384	1,212
Ulverstone*	201	103	304
WSSA	431	153	584

<b>Total</b>	<b>6,127</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>8,505</b>
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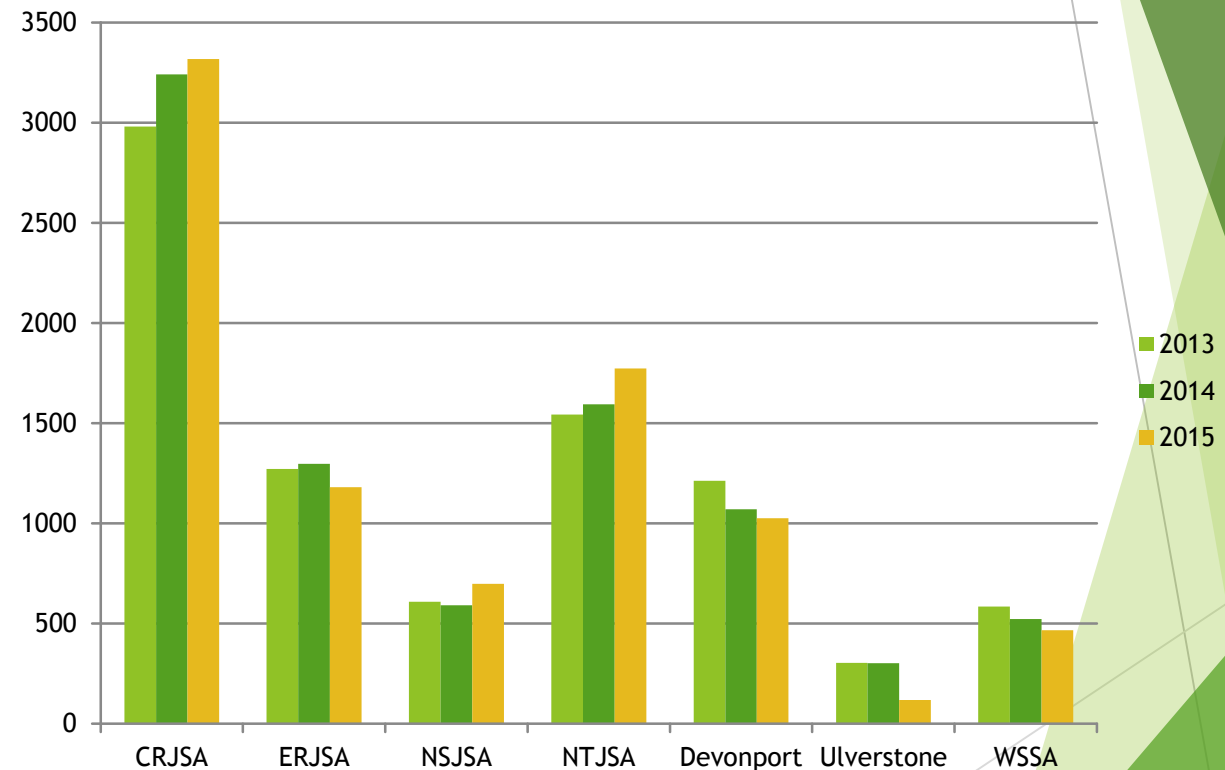
# Participation Comparison by Association 2013 - 2015

Under 6 to Under 12

Assoc	2013	2014	2015
CRJSA	2982	3241	3318
ERJSA	1271	1297	1180
NSJSA	609	591	699
NTJSA	1543	1595	1773
Devonport	1212	1071	1026
Ulverstone*	304	302	118
WSSA	584	523	466

<b>Total</b>	<b>8,505</b>	<b>8,670</b>	<b>8,580</b>
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\* It should be noted that whilst Ulverstone are not one of the six junior associations, they do run junior competitions within their own club that represents their area; for the sake of completeness we have added the Ulverstone participation number into these charts.



# Structure

## Chapter Seven

***We have a responsibility to keep young people playing sport ...***

# Structure

Football Federation Tasmania as the governing body has control of football in Tasmania. FFT directly administers youth and senior competitions and has six associations in the junior space. Along with the senior clubs, these junior associations are the full members of FFT with voting rights at the AGM.

These associations are:

Hobart:

- ▶ Central Region Junior Soccer
- ▶ Eastern Region Junior Soccer Association
- ▶ Northern Suburbs Junior Soccer

Launceston:

- ▶ Northern Tasmanian Junior Soccer Association

Devonport:

- ▶ Devonport Junior Soccer Association

Burnie:

- ▶ Western Schools Soccer Association

The six junior associations have their own management committees and to a large extent are almost entirely self-sufficient. They are responsible for providing football opportunities for around two-thirds of all players in Tasmania.

Each of their players is registered with FFT and pays a fee which covers insurance as part of the national deal through Football Federation Australia. FFT record the registrations through the national data base and manage the payment of National Registration Levy fees to FFA on behalf of the junior associations.

In the past, FFT has had an ad-hoc working relationship with the various junior associations and has established pathways which give the more talented players the opportunity to progress in the sport.

This section provides feedback from each of the six junior associations regarding their structure, management, financial model and relationships. The participants who were interviewed for this section were the “one-or-two” key leaders within each association.

\* Appendix A provides a visual summary of the organisation of each Junior Association.





CENTRAL REGION (CRJSA) is the largest football-participation body in Tasmania. It is run by a committee and includes part-time paid positions.

It presents a challenge for committee members and club/team delegates and features up to 20 hours a week of volunteer work for a number of people who are in leadership roles across the association.

The committee meets 11 times per year with six of these meetings also including the club/team delegates. Whilst attendance is compulsory, there has been a drop in participation levels at these meetings over the past 18 months.

In a geographical sense it is also large, by Tasmanian standards, spread from St Virgil's in Hobart's north at Austins Ferry through to Cygnet. This is a distance of more than 50kms. In addition Central Region also use Olympia Warriors FC's facilities at Warrane on the Eastern shore; although there is some concern about the artificial surface and the risk of injury.

The Association is currently in a buoyant financial position with cash reserves in excess of \$100,000. This has led to some discussion and light-criticism that Central Region is too profitable. In response to this the committee has continued to fund a number of initiatives for its members and teams.

The fees collected by the Association are \$58 per player and \$28 of this amount is given to Football Federation Tasmania while \$30 is retained by Central Region. It is important to note that there has been no increase in Central Region's fees over the past four years.

There is then a range of registration fees charged by clubs/teams from a low figure of around \$70 up to \$200 for some clubs.

In return for the memberships which are paid to Central Region, each Club gets balls for every team at a total cost of \$15,000. The Association also pays for two Working-with-Children checks for each club/team as well as providing rebates to schools for ground hire. There has also been increased maintenance relief to schools.

Last year CRJSA purchased \$12,000 of pop-up goals and these were provided to clubs/teams. There is also a 75% subsidy for coaching courses attended and Central Region also paid for a Girls Development Program.

Central Region employ a part-time Roster-Secretary on an honorarium of \$1500 per season to manage the rostering and ground bookings. They also run a "traffic light" system on their website regarding ground availability particularly in inclement conditions. Communication remains a challenge with so many teams and parents involved

The most significant senior clubs operating within Central Region are Kingborough, South Hobart, New Town Eagles and Olympia and they provide coaches and venues for matches from under 6 through to under 12; with the largest amount of players in the under 6 to under 9 age groups. However there are a large amount of smaller clubs and/or teams either affiliated with clubs or loosely representing schools. A good example is West Hobart that has operated independently and successfully for many years.

The competitions at every level are either girls only or mixed. Clubs/teams are responsible for nominating the divisions they wish to play in and then there are five or six weeks of grading rounds to ensure that players and teams are in a grade appropriate to their ability, which provides a better experience. Grading is critical and taken seriously as CRJSA are very keen to avoid "20-0" results during the season.

There is normally a 16-week roster with no games played in the school holidays.

The older age groups play regularly on the Domain, however with significant works in 2015, access was severely limited. This has caused other grounds to “get a hammering” in terms of rostering. Most importantly this has also caused Central Region to be at full capacity and in a situation where it can’t really grow any bigger.

The fundamental issue is the availability of playing surfaces at appropriate times. In 2015 some junior matches have kicked-off as late as 2pm on a Saturday; a time at which junior sport has normally finished and seniors are using the available facilities.

As a solution many of the matches are now 9 players per side; using half pitches. To facilitate this Central Region has purchased portable goals. Where matches are being played on “neutral” spaces these games have, in many cases, used plastic cones for goals. There is a problem regarding set-up of equipment if the venue is no-one’s home ground. To simply expand into “random” spaces creates logistical and management issues.

In terms of the operation of teams, there is a distinct difference between clubs and schools. In general, one or two people run each school’s football program. It is apparent that schools don’t have enough people and the quality of coaching is a problem. There is very little integration between the “actual school” and its football teams and the parents that run them.

This is the area of the parent/coach and the task is usually left to those that are available between 3pm-4pm on the day of training. It is clear that by the age of 9-10 years children want better development and therefore coaches need to be more knowledgeable rather than just the well-meaning parent who happens to be available.

In the view of Central Region this is the space where Football Federation Tasmania can help the most. This help, however, also needs to come from people who are available between 3pm-4pm on weekdays to participate in and support training sessions at the various schools.

There also needs to be some work done on the timing between school training and club commitments to ensure that there is the right availability of coaches to support the school teams. The view is that the key issue to growing and developing the sport is training rather than games. There is plenty of support for the matches on a Saturday, but far less quality assistance available during the week.

One option is to identify and train a group of “older people” who have more time on their hands. The conundrum here, according to some is that the players prefer having younger coaches to whom they can more easily relate.

One possible model would be to have players from the NTC trained to a Coaching Skill Certificate level and work with the primary school teams. There is, of course, questions of availability particularly around the NTC players own training time.

An additional possibility discussed with Central Region was to create better links between clubs and school teams. It is clear there needs to be work done on how the links are created between clubs and schools and in that environment how FFT can support the upskilling of coaches.

Clearly the idea is to create a natural geographical relationship between clubs and schools. Although an interesting side effect is that some children who play for school teams have grown up seeing their local club as a rival on the pitch and are not inclined to want to join them in later years.

The strong view is that all senior clubs need to participate in the development and management of junior football and this doesn't happen. The big clubs need to resource-up to do juniors. They need someone who wants to look after the players and transition them through into the club environment and youth football.

In addition there are issues created by the introduction of the Skills Acquisition Program (SAP) and its associated tournaments. Previously there were junior carnivals in this space which were overseen and organised in Hobart by FFT. These carnivals created a good relationship between the various junior associations which doesn't exist to the same extent anymore. There appears to be a desire to re-establish the Hobart Carnival and Central Region would be happy to co-ordinate a competition between regions.

It is also worth noting that with the introduction of SAP, female participation at that level fell significantly and as a result CRJSA (in conjunction with South Hobart, Kingborough and New Town Eagles) ran free and heavily subsidised female only development programs in 2014 and 2015. FFT was to be involved in 2015 but had very little to do with the program.

In closing there was discussion regarding the fact that Central Region don't do sponsorship and have not particularly seen the need to commercialise their competitions.

On the playing-side there is a strong belief that the structure is basically right and what is being delivered is good value. They endeavour wherever possible to accommodate players into competitions that are suitable.





EASTERN REGION operates exclusively on the eastern shore of Hobart. The Association (ERJSA) meets once a month during the season and on an ad-hoc basis over the summer period. Around 8-10 people attend each meeting and are happy to assist; however there remains an issue in filling the executive positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary on the committee. This challenge has not been supported by the regular turnover of committee members.

Every club is given an operational job on behalf of the association but with this regular turnover there is limited consistency across activities. The volunteers are entirely made up of parents and Eastern Region would love to expand this base to get grandparents involved. They believe a program supported by Football Federation Tasmania to encourage grandparents would be well received.

The Association is on solid financial footing and has cash reserves of up to \$30,000 on an annual basis. The player fees are \$45 with \$17 retained by the Association and the remainder paid to FFT. The players from the ten clubs pay an average of around \$80-\$120 in total which includes the fees. One positive initiative in Eastern Region is the implementation of a discount for multiple children. On this basis most of the clubs retain a positive balance between say \$3,500 and \$10,000.

The separate clubs have affiliations with schools and access their players on a suburban basis and there is good collaboration between the clubs and schools. The biggest club is Eastern Shore Saints with its players principally drawn from Catholic schools. Within this overall structure, schools are feeders to the junior clubs.

Some of the clubs in Eastern Region have sponsors, but their basic source of revenue is through registrations and this serves to fund kits and equipment. In most cases the players give their playing shirts back at the end of the season.

On the whole the clubs efforts are focussed on the start and end of the season and to some extent the actual competitions just run themselves. Clubs don't tend to do very much fundraising as they are trying to be sustainable rather than profitable.

In regard to playing facilities there is an ongoing arrangement with the City of Clarence. A good relationship has led to flexibility around rostering and charges.

The majority of matches on the eastern shore are played in age centres with the years 6-7 at Kangaroo Bay with 8 pitches and matches between 9am-12noon. The 8-9's are at Edgeworth Park with 5 pitches, while the 10 year olds play at Risdon Vale using 2 pitches in a mixed teams format. At Cambridge Park the 11's play on the cricket oval using two pitches and the 12 year olds are on the soccer pitch and play two matches on a Friday night.

In addition to the above there are also matches at Rokeby, where Emmanuel Christian School play home games as well as Edgeworth Park being open to walk-ups and clubs in general.

The rosters for Eastern Region are done by Michele Green from FFT and ERJSA feel that Michele is doing a good job on their behalf.

One of the most notable points from the meeting with Eastern Region is that they have significant capacity to take more players at all ages. Eastern Shore Saints have placed a cap and a registration deadline on players; however the association as a whole is not at all limited by ground availability. It is their view that the entire competition structure could double in size and they believe there are no logistical barriers to this occurring.

There is a strong view that in the future the growth area will be Sorell, particularly with the rise of South East United. There is also no doubt that the Sorell Council has the ability to provide more grounds to accommodate junior footballers.

In regard to senior clubs, as mentioned, the involvement of South East United is very positive. Also, Nelson have started with Under 12's in Eastern Region which means they are involved. The two biggest clubs on the eastern shore, Olympia Warriors FC and Clarence United are not involved with ERJSA. Initially, in the discussion, this wasn't particularly seen as a positive or negative but rather a statement of fact.

On the whole there is no plan or even discussion around transition and continuation in the sport. Clubs will take the best players but don't want to be involved. On this discussion point the view was very much that the senior clubs should be significantly more involved.

Clubs have taken players to their SAP programs but in essence there has been no discussion with ERJSA. The senior clubs do no work in the junior space and there is no established pathway into club football. In fact there is in general a complete lack of communication. In many cases the parents of players in Eastern Region would not even know who the senior clubs were.

This discussion raised the question of whether clubs could run their own associations? As an example South East United are hoping to expand into an effective east-coast "association". There is a view that the regional demographics are just about right to sustain this and even in Central Region there could be "associations" within the three major clubs.

In regard to junior football on the eastern shore, travel times are good and it gives lots of teams and children the opportunity to play against more teams and have greater variety in their football experience.

As with other associations/regions, young players are lucky to get one coach per team and in many cases this parent is really a team manager. Any opportunity to take a different approach to coaching would be greatly appreciated.

The perfect scenario would be to have someone moving around at training teaching one new drill to each parent/coach each week. Ideally there is a need for ex-players to get more involved in coaching.

Football is easier to play and our competitive advantage is that you can just play.

This growth of the game and the increase in opportunities is supported by the actions of the councils particularly with regard to proposed works at Cambridge and Seven Mile Beach; and the ongoing development of Pembroke Park in Sorell. In addition the re-development of Kangaroo Bay, near Rosny College looks very good and is a good advertisement for sport in the area.

One of the issue is regarding player pathways and the threat of players going to clubs earlier. This is having a big impact on the top end with under 11 and under 12 competitions now becoming a "B Grade" standard. The better players are going into SAP and becoming part of the club system earlier, while leaving the less talented behind.

Children who play multiple sports tend to stay in the region and don't go to clubs. Eastern Region also make changes in rosters to accommodate other sports; for example some teams have asked to finish their football commitments by 11am on a Saturday to allow them to play Basketball.

On the whole, ERJSA believe they are a well managed organisation that is well funded and has the ability to expand significantly and provide enhanced opportunities for young players. They would very much like to broaden the discussion with Football Federation Tasmania and senior clubs to create a better relationship with Junior Associations.



NORTHERN SUBURBS Junior Soccer Association are one of the smaller associations in the South of the State. The organisation has had its ups and down over the years but at present has a very dedicated board of volunteers that is working really hard and running the association well. Things are tight financially but there is more control and a very stable position exists for the NSJSA in 2016.

The Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Members are voted in by clubs in line with the Constitution. The Association is principally made up of Bagdad, Brighton, St Pauls, Derwent, New Norfolk, Metro, Holy Rosary, Dominic and Glenorchy Knights.

It is important to note that some schools have not been able to support the junior football program over the years causing less teams that are school based. Many of these players from these schools have moved to the local club teams. In any case the player numbers are increasing; whilst the fees have remained constant.

NSJSA have 700+ players in 65 -70 teams. They play in under 6, under 7, under 8, under 9, under 10, under 11 and under 12 competitions. All teams are able to play as mixed.

Girls make up 20% of the under 6 to under 8 teams; however they continue to leave the game as they get closer to under 12's. Ideally they would like to have all-girl teams if they could sustain them.

As with all other associations the mums and dads fill the role of manager or coach. The only club that has a SAP licence in the association is the Glenorchy Knights.

To some extent Glenorchy Knights are seen as a competitor by a number of the other clubs. This is due to Knights having a SAP program and it is available for young players from any team. Some clubs feel this is a useful recruitment tool for Knights. In saying this it is important also to mention that the Glenorchy Knights have given hundreds and possibly thousands of players an opportunity to play the game as they have filled the void from many schools not sustaining teams including Rosetta Primary School, Moonah Primary School and Bowen Road Primary School.

The games are all played at club grounds. This includes Weily Park, Metro and Brighton who have lights. Everyone has their own pitches, but one of the issues for some clubs is the age of the lights. Some councils have been slow to assist with the improvement of facilities which is frustrating. In the case of New Norfolk the grounds can only be used if New Norfolk plays and this limits the opportunity to play more games in the region.

NSJSA would like to explore the possibility of having Friday night as a major option for children in the region, but this is facility dependent.

Some matches are played on Friday night between 5pm-8pm with the majority being scheduled for Saturday morning from 9am-12 noon. The referees are the parents who act as game leaders.

It is worth noting that there are lots of Northern Suburbs children who play in Central Region. NSJSA believes it could get past 1,000 plus players if everyone who lived in the region played in the region, particularly as the private schools also tend to play in Central, such as St Theresa's and Sacred Heart.

The view from the senior committee members of NSJSA is that they could have vastly increased numbers if the above was rectified.

In regard to fees the players are charged \$48 with Football Federation Tasmania retaining \$28 and NSJSA receiving \$20. The clubs then generally charge between \$90-\$110 per player.

Principally the clubs are looking to cover costs to council for grounds.

NSJSA have around \$20,000 in the bank and generate a return of circa \$5,000 per season. In return for this the association pays for match balls as well as any coaching courses for team representatives.

The association has turned the finances around through fundraising and have remained a purely volunteer-based organisation who are supported by people who are in the sport for the right reason.

In regard to rosters this was previously done by admin staff within FFT but this is now done by the association. The competition is the easiest to manage in Hobart, given that it is the smallest and the set-up in regard to matches and grounds is relatively straight-forward and the committee believe they have good control of all aspects.

Like all other competitions there are times when game cancellations occur and these are not ideal however the councils make the decisions. There is then a very straight forward mechanism to notify clubs and players through the NSJSA website.

One of the consistent topics of conversation with all associations was the carnivals that were previously organised between the various regions of the State. In the view of NSJSA the carnivals struggled because some teams were solely focused on winning. Northern Suburbs did not always have enough players for their teams and were keen to share players with Central Region.

There is a view that it would have been good to keep the carnivals going however the creation of SAP became something of a “line in the sand”. The role of FFT diminished in regard to the carnivals and is now focused on the SAP Festivals.

Northern Suburbs used to run their own carnival over two days. NSJSA had a small fee (\$50) for regional teams representing the association and then would cover additional costs. The association always pushed participation at carnivals. The current carnivals in the North continue to offer opportunities to clubs.

In regard to the on-going structure, Northern Suburbs would not like the junior clubs to be integrated with the Victory League clubs. It is the preferred position to maintain self-governance of junior teams and this is supported by Glenorchy Knights having a junior set-up which is completely separate from Knights seniors.

The transition into youth football with clubs was also addressed and there is a view that the cost for the step from juniors to youth can be three times the amount that juniors currently pay to play. This is seen as a serious barrier within the region and the effect is that there are not many Northern Suburbs youth teams due to these financial considerations. It is important to note here that the increase in fees from junior to youth level occur because FFT/FFA double their fees required at this level.

Finally, there was discussion that one big association in Hobart would break down walls and in theory a purely club based junior competition would be ideal but wouldn't work as players need to play in their immediate region due mainly to travel requirements.



NORTHERN TASMANIA Junior Soccer Association (NTJSA) is made up of eight junior clubs with 6 full-time members and 2 Associates. The full members are Launceston United, Westside Devils (affiliated with Launceston City), Riverside Olympic, Southern Raiders (previously with Prospect Knights) and North Launceston Eagles and George Town who both have no senior alignment.

These founding clubs are all full members and then there are the two smaller associates in Deloraine and Northern Rangers Christian League. The full members are responsible for voting in the NTJSA Committee.

The Committee has stability in membership with the President being incumbent for seven years and most members serving a 3-4 year term. In addition the Committee is supported by a paid manager as well as two casual staff who are responsible for rostering and refereeing.

All of the competitions within the NTJSA are mixed teams and they play in competitions as follows; under 6, under 7, under 9, under 11, under 13, under 15 and under 16.

There is also the opportunity to play in junior girls competitions for those in the 11-13 age bracket, but this depends on the number of girls available and wishing to play.

NTJSA also runs a senior girls competition for the 14-16 age bracket. There are 1,775 players with 360 girls representing around 20% of the playing numbers.

The association is maintaining its numbers in girls and whilst the overall numbers are up over the years there is something of a period of stagnation across the past 2 to 3 seasons. This is consistent with the numbers generally around Tasmania.

One of the most significant positives remains the fact that all matches are played at Churchill Park and have been for many years. There are up to a maximum of 2,000 people in attendance on a Saturday; yet there still remains the opportunity to expand the competitions and take on more players.

NTJSA charge \$45 per player plus \$30 goes to FFT and FFA. These amounts are included in what the clubs charge per player, which could total between \$95-150.

NTJSA charge \$45 per player with \$28 going to Football Federation Tasmania. The clubs then charge the players between \$95 and \$150 for the season with the average cost being around \$125. For this amount the players get their shirts supplied and have to provide their own socks and shorts.

The costs of referees is around \$3,000 per month. Whilst there are some older referees the majority are children who are recruited and trained through Ross Logan and all are paid to do games.

The association is run “very skinny” and the aim is to keep costs down to an absolute minimum. The fees have been the same for five years and NTJSA is holding around \$10,000 in cash. The association pays for a casual groundsman as well as the part-time staff and has total wage expenses of around \$48,000 per year. On top of this the council are responsible for some maintenance as well as mowing lawns.

The cost to hire Churchill Park for the season is \$20,000. The grounds are due to be re-surfaced in the future but on the whole they are in good condition. Last season there was only one round of matches lost to weather; however in 2013 five-rounds were washed out.

As with other associations the parents do the majority of the coaching. The association and the clubs have been pro-active in supporting the parents and fifty-four recently completed a free Grassroots Coaching Course. There is also the opportunity to do a Skills Training Certificate and this is principally funded by the clubs.

The association believes that the current club structure at junior level works well and the central location for playing all matches really helps. It is interesting to note that 30 years ago the competitions were school based. Everything is now set-up to get senior clubs and some of their older players involved. The alignment to senior clubs creates a pathway for players to continue in the sport. This has led to a focus of the bigger clubs on junior soccer.

The clubs are very responsive and in particular Launceston United among others are very good. As the junior competitions end with under 16's, there are currently not enough teams for under 18's within the senior club structure. Also this has led to a situation where the "not so good players" are struggling to find places to play. Anecdotally there are several 17 year olds who aren't finding the appropriate opportunities to continue.

In regard to additional playing opportunities, there is still a desire to see competitive carnivals continue. The Launceston tournament for under 10's didn't run last year however NTJSA still run some regional squads and send teams to interstate carnivals.

Where there is still regional competitions, the southern squads tend to be made up of club teams while the north and north-west is based more on representative age groups.

There is a feeling that carnivals may help with player retention. NTJSA runs regional squads with two teams each in under 10, under 11, under 12's. In addition there are two squads in under 13's and under 14's that have the opportunity to travel to the mainland to play.

There is still a Launceston Carnival which is held on the last weekend in September and the Burnie Carnival is shortly after on the weekend of 10 October 2015. NTJSA would still very much like to be able to participate in a Hobart Carnival.

In regard to the overall structure particularly as it relates to pathways and development, NTJSA and FFT have created the Northern Development Centre. This is instead of the SAP structure which exists in Hobart. All of the talented players are centralised and up to 50 young players are training in this environment each week.

In regard to the clubs it will be important to identify a way for the smaller clubs to be included in a pathway and the structure needs to be created to allow the players to continue.

This may also involve slight re-shaping of competitions. Two years ago girl's football was nine players per side and now it is 11 per team. It may be time to re-address this and reduce numbers again.

At this stage NTJSA are reasonably happy with FFT support. There is a desire to continue to see FFT staff coming up to Launceston. There is also a need for more people to be able to work with school teams. This was done to great effect in 2014 by FFT Football Participation Officer Tim Lunn and his departure has been a big loss.

All in all the structure is good, the numbers are strong and the environment of playing together at Churchill Park is extremely positive.



DEVONPORT Junior Soccer (DJS) is also made up of a Committee populated by hard-working and dedicated volunteers. The association is responsible for the management and rostering of the competition at Meercroft Park; however there is a key link with Devonport Strikers senior football club.

In the past, representative sides used to play under the name of Devonport Juniors. This has been impacted by the issuing of a SAP licence to Devonport Strikers as they now have their own juniors that have not been part of the Devonport Junior Association.

The competitions run by DJS are for age groups from under 5 though to under 12, featuring every age group. In addition there is also a high school's competition during the week which has under 14 and under 16 boys as well as under 16 girls. The competitions are for boys and girls mixed teams.

Overall numbers are flat with a slight decrease of 98 players. There has continued to be an increase in the under 5 and under 6 divisions and overall there are between 1100-1200 players within the association.

Devonport Junior Soccer covers the area from Latrobe through to Devonport and could comfortably expand to take up to 1500 players. Matches have been starting as late as 1pm on two of the pitches and there is additional capacity.

Clubs are basically drawn from schools who put teams forward. There are 20 schools that participate and it costs \$60 to register. The schools collect the money and make payments to the association. They also provide the uniforms to the players.

For many years DJS official Marlene Crabtree did all of the registrations for the schools, but now that she has moved on, the schools need to use the on-line registration system. Marlene looked after the entire competition for 25 years and provided fantastic service before moving to be part of Devonport Strikers.

On match day the committee does the set-up with a roster system for the teams to assist with the pack-up. In addition the schools and teams are rostered to work in the canteen.

The association is financially sound and has around \$40,000 in the bank. This includes \$2,000 that Marlene put into a bank account many years ago and now has grown to \$20,000.

One of the challenges is in terms of progressing in the sport which is complicated by the fact that there is only one club in town. This limits the opportunities for players and there is a view that a club should be formed in Latrobe.

There should be the opportunity to identify better pathways. One option is for an improved high school competition then there is a choice between going to Strikers or continuing on at school; or indeed playing in both competitions.

The association very much believes that it has a responsibility to keep children playing sport. Currently there is not enough options at the top of the sport to keep young players going. Pathways should be highlighted and it must be ensured that any drop-off is not a result of cost.

One option that has been discussed is to raise the age groups within DJS to include under 13's. This would create more opportunities to keep the children playing longer and potentially reduce some of the drop-off.

There also needs to be more choices for players with different skill levels. The natural next step is into SAP which is seen as being a little bit exclusive and not just for children who are talented but more for those that have parents who can pay for their participation.

The ever-present issue of carnivals was raised and there is a belief that they provide more opportunities for children to play. Within Devonport Junior Soccer representative sides are open to everyone. The only real cost is a \$10 hire fee for the uniform.

Trials are conducted to identify the best players for the teams and in addition a development side is selected to play in carnivals. As a result DJS have between 100-120 players in representative programs across under 10, under 11 and under 12's.

Additional opportunities are essential to assist in slowing the big drop-off in players from primary to high school. It is clear that Aussie Rules football clubs have more of a pull on students at the high school age.

One of the unfortunate elements is that football gives Australian Rules Football players a good skills grounding and this is fine with parents who don't want children playing Australian Rules Football at primary school age. In essence football has become a development ground for AFL clubs on the north-west coast.

In spite of this there remains a good committee at DJS who operate as a positive group and are happy to help wherever possible. Clearly there can always be more volunteers at this level and there has been a tradition of one person doing much of the work.

Marlene Crabtree has left a gap after 25 years of service and the current President, Richard Bidwell has now done three years and is likely to stay on for another two seasons.

The executive believe that they need to maintain a big picture view particularly in relation to the Devonport Council. There have been overtures to the council in regard to lights at Meercroft Park, which would cost circa \$500,000. This would allow DJS to make the sport more attractive as an evening social event with all games at Meercroft. The association would like Football Federation Tasmania to assist in supporting Devonport Junior Soccer with the Devonport Council. This could be done in partnership with Touch Football who also use the grounds.



WESTERN SCHOOLS Soccer Association operate the J League on the north-west coast around Burnie, Somerset and Wynyard and the competition is principally run by Brett Kershaw and Darren Purton. A constitution was established 3 years ago for WSSA. The competitions for high school and primary school teams were previously supported by Burnie Sports & Events, an organisation that no longer exists; however there remains a very good relationship with the Council.

At one point in the past there was a large amount of money believed to have been stolen and this set things back and required a more organised structure.

WSSA hired Sarah Cowen as secretary and also secured Caterpillar as a major sponsor to the value of \$20,000. Games were played at Wynyard and Burnie; however they are now principally at Burnie. There are 493 young people playing from under 6 through to under 12 at the McKenna Park, Hockey Complex.

Recently the management of the high school competition has shifted and the matches are now organised from within Marist High School. There are five schools and 15 teams in this competition which is not affiliated with Football Federation Tasmania.

The primary school aged competitions now run by Western Schools have four divisions which are under 6/7, under 8/9 and under 10/11 combined and then under 12's as a stand alone age group.

Each season the children receive a playing shirt which is required to be returned. They also get a football bag and in previous seasons they have received a football.

There are 52-53 teams and Mel Quirk, a Somerset player is now the secretary. She receives around \$5000 per year to manage the rostering. In addition the treasurer and ground manager/referee coordinator receive payments in the order of \$1500.

The players in the 6/7 age group pay \$50 and they represent their schools with the school teams appointing the coaches. Those players above the 6/7's pay \$75 for the season and the people running the teams are called facilitators not coaches.

The Wynyard Soccer Club which combines four schools charges slightly extra but most other teams stick to the recommended fee. All players are registered through WSSA.

The prices and numbers compare very well to Auskick which has roughly 130 children and charges \$65 per player

The association has \$30,000 in the bank and has been buying goal-nets and corner posts for the pitches. The goal is to keep cost down and run WSSA as break even. Within this structure the children play 15 games as well as appearing at the registration day. There is also a free BBQ at end of the year.

WSSA has managed carnivals in the years past but is looking towards SAP in the future. The talented players are paying \$100 to train at Burnie United where the club then pays the coaches. These programs are for under 10, under 11, under 12's with separate girls development opportunities.

Additionally the association sees the support of coaching as one of its main functions and are happy to pay for anyone doing grassroots coaching courses.

Carnivals have been an important part of the sporting landscape on the north-west coast and this is true with football as well. The last big carnival was in August 2013 at Montello Park in Burnie and over 500 players attended. They also served to give the sport good exposure which has dropped away a little over the past 18 months.

Each of the players received a showbag with vouchers and the event was not run on a commercial basis, but rather just to cover costs and provide a good, additional playing experience.

The landscape has changed with Central Region no longer participating because of the advent of the SAP Carnivals and a lower turn-out from NTJSA. There are still Devonport, Launceston and Burnie Carnivals but they don't have the same importance as in the past. In 2015 the Burnie Carnival was held on 5<sup>th</sup> September.

Whilst there was agreement that the SAP programs are definitely a positive there is still a desire to return to the larger carnivals; however this depends on ensuring that the Hobart teams participate.

There are currently two very good WSSA teams now U14's at Burnie and Somerset. Club football starts at U14 for boys and under 15 for girls and it is important that the league has a goal of pushing players into youth.

It is the belief of the committee that the junior league can definitely expand and whilst the structure has already been overhauled there is room for more players. They also believe that with more education and exposure around the game that the competition could literally pick-up every young player in Burnie.



## Junior Football in other States:

### ▶ CAPITAL FOOTBALL



- ▶ Capital Football run the competitions from U10 and U11 MiniRoos and Under 12 to Under 18. MiniRoos from U5 - U9 is run within the junior league clubs at Capital Football.
- ▶ Junior referees are linked with their junior league club and appointed by a referee club coordinator.
- ▶ Private schools are incorporated into Capital Football junior league competitions and are identified and treated like local clubs.
- ▶ There are clubs that participate in junior league competitions that are junior league clubs, senior clubs with junior teams and NPL clubs with community junior league.
- ▶ Kick off times are 11.30 (U10), 12.30 (U11 and U13), 1.45pm (U12 and U14) and 3.10pm (U15, U16, U18)
- ▶ Participation is strongest from U10 - U12 and then there is a drop off around U15 and U16 age groups.

### ▶ NORTHERN NSW



- ▶ Structure is similar to that of FFT. NNSWF is comprised of seven (7) Member Zones who manage community competitions within their areas with limited to nil involvement in operations by Northern NSW Football.
- ▶ NNSWF community competitions are made up solely of affiliated football clubs who register a range of junior and senior teams within their affiliated zone competitions.
- ▶ There are a small number of 'senior only' clubs that do not field junior teams and alternatively a small number of clubs that focus specifically on junior teams but the vast majority enter both junior and senior teams into affiliated community competitions managed by their respective member zones.
- ▶ Northern NSW Football is responsible for managing NNSWF Premier Competitions including our Skill Acquisition & Game Training Programs (metro & regional), NEW FM 1st Division, Newcastle Herald Women's Premier League and the PS4 National Premier Leagues (Junior & Senior).
- ▶ NNSWF is also responsible for the management of the Emerging Jets Academy and the Newcastle Jets Westfield W-League team.
- ▶ All players are registered using the FFAs online registration platform, MyFootballClub.



## ▶ Victoria

- ▶ Young players are divided into Junior (born in 1997 - 2003) and MiniRoos (born 2004 & younger).
- ▶ The Victorian competitions fall under one of two categories - Metropolitan or Regional.
- ▶ Metropolitan competitions are administered centrally by Football Federation Victoria, and all clubs located in the metropolitan zones are affiliated with FFV directly, rather than via an association.
- ▶ In these competitions, FFV are responsible for every aspect including fixturing across hundreds and hundreds of matches.
- ▶ Regional competitions are administered by local associations (e.g. Ballarat & District Soccer Association), with a small handful of regional clubs remote enough that they just run their own intra-club activities. It is worth noting that FFV currently have two regional associations (Geelong and Shepparton) that are “integrated”, meaning FFV manage their competitions.



## ▶ South Australia

- ▶ Currently all senior men's clubs that participate in the FFSA competitions are required to field junior teams. NPL teams must field a team in every age group from under 6 to under 16 and State League must field a minimum of three teams in the age group 12-16 and two MiniRoos teams.
- ▶ Clubs can field teams in under 17's but this is optional. The teams in the age group 12-17 participate in the Junior Premier League. The under 12 age group is geographically zoned, with the under 13-17 graded into A, B and C divisions.
- ▶ The MiniRoos age groups are geographically zoned. In addition to the Junior Premier League, FFSA also conduct the Junior State League. Any club may register a team into this competition, including teams that do not conduct senior men's teams in FFSA Competitions.
- ▶ In addition to FFSA Competitions, there are a number of junior affiliated associations that conduct competitions. The metropolitan junior associations cater for both primary and high school teams and also club teams. Players are permitted to register for both an affiliated association competition and a FFSA Competition.
- ▶ In addition to the Junior Premier and State League, FFSA also conduct junior girls competitions in the age group of under 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17. Any club may register teams into these competitions.



## ▶ WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- ▶ MiniRoos - The 6&7s will play in a cluster format where their club will essentially be grouped up with another 3 or 4 clubs in the same geographical area to minimise travel time. Teams will play each other each week in a carnival type atmosphere where many clusters will have multiple games going at once. Each club will have a turn to host throughout the season.
- ▶ In addition to the cluster formats, FFWA run traditional home and away style fixtures. These leagues are based on a 10 team competition where each team plays each other twice in an 18 round season. All leagues in these MiniRoos age groups are divided into North and South teams which assists with minimising travel time for the younger age groups.
- ▶ 8&9s - Some confusion lies with the 8&9s and the difference between some of the leagues. There are essentially three levels of competition for these two age brackets which are Soccerroos, Olyroos & Joeys which are described as below.
  - ▶ Soccerroos - Players or teams who have had a few years experience playing football.
  - ▶ Olyroos - Players who have an intermediate understanding and level of playing the game for their age but are still learning.
  - ▶ Joeys - Generally players who have never played before or have had minimal contact with a football.

- ▶ There is NO difference between the colours for this age group in terms of playing standard. For example 9 Nth Olyroos Gold is of the same level as 9 Nth Olyroos Green. The colours are purely there to divide the number of teams that request each level (Soccerroos, Olyroos & Joeys). For example if 30 clubs request an Olyroos team we essentially divide them up over 3 leagues/colours (Gold, Green, Bronze) as evenly as possible in terms of geographical location to try and minimise travel time.
- ▶ 10&11s - The colours in this age group are loosely based on alphabetical order and the playing level. For example with different colours/leagues (Blue, Green, Orange, Purple, etc.) Blue would essentially be the highest level of competition with Green to follow, etc.
- ▶ Junior League - FFWA Junior Leagues & Girls Leagues also run a traditional home and away style fixture. These leagues (outlined below) are based on a 10 team league where each team plays each other twice which leaves an 18 round season. From the 12-18s age groups we offer a Top 4 Finals Series run across two weekends.
- ▶ 12-18s (Mixed) - Ages 12-15s are divided into three areas based on ability & location. There are three top tier divisions which we label as our Metropolitan competitions (Div 1, Div 2, Div 3) with a mix of North and South of the River. After these top three divisions clubs are then divided again into North and South competitions to minimise travel time.
- ▶ Ages 16-18s only have Metropolitan competitions and do not run with North & South specific.
- ▶ 13-17s (Girls Only) - In the girls competitions FFWA offer Age groups of Under 13s, 14s, 15s & 17s. While it is on the rise there is still not the demand for a 16s age group. These girls league only run with Metropolitan competitions and do not run with North & South specific.

## ► NORTHERN TERRITORY



- Football Federation Northern Territory is made up of three (3) main Zones:
- - NorZone (Darwin and surrounds);
- - Central Zone (Katherine and surrounds);
- - Southern Zone (Alice Springs).
- The above mentioned areas are all coordinated by Football Federation Northern Territory. Two FFNT employees work in Alice Springs in order to implement the development in the Southern Zone.
- Players are registered in MyFootballClub and the competition is made up of Clubs in each zone.
- Participation numbers for Under 12s are growing at 8%.
- Female junior registrations have slightly dropped in the last two (2) years.

## ► NEW SOUTH WALES



- Football NSW is made up of the following: -
- Grassroots Football - 32 Football Associations who administer and deliver grassroots football competitions. The structure of these competitions varies greatly depending on the nature and size of the Association.
- This is effectively a similar overall model to Tasmania where the State Association is not directly involved in the day-to-day running of these competitions.
- In regard to competitions run directly by Football New South Wales: -
- Skill Acquisition Program are operated for the age groups of under 9, under 10 and under 11 and there are thirty-one license-holding clubs each with 6 teams in the program.
- Competitions are also run for:
- PS4 NPL Men's 1 - (U12) - 12 clubs
- PS4 NPL Men's 2 - (U12) - 12 clubs
- Regional Youth League - (U12) - 14 clubs
- Regional Conference League - (U12) - 7 Clubs
- All players are registered on MyFootballClub.

# Cost

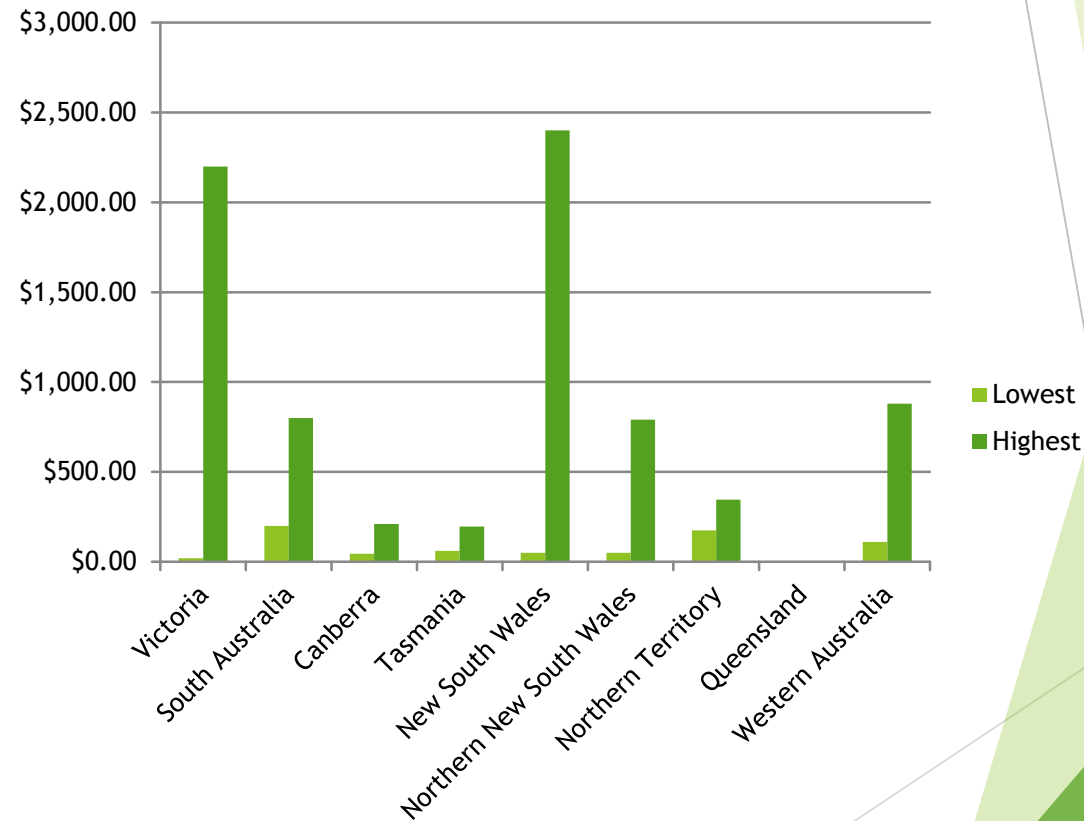
## Chapter Eight

***There are elite junior teams within National Premier League clubs and the players pay in excess of \$2000 to participate...***

# 2014 Participation Cost for Junior's by State Under 6 to Under12

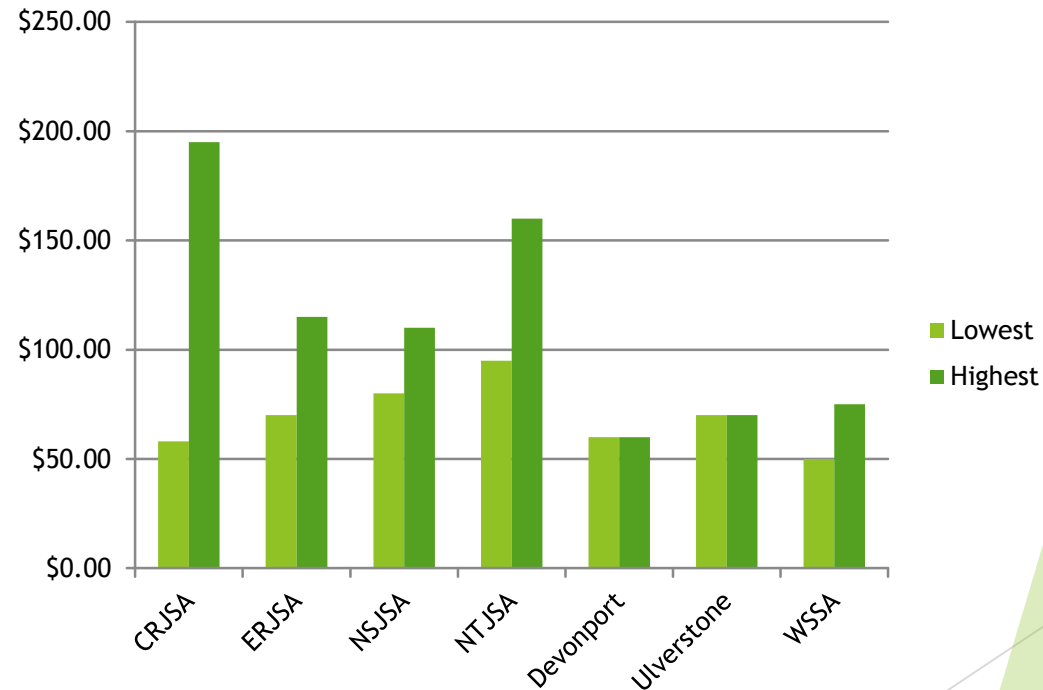
State	Lowest	Highest
Victoria	\$20	\$2,200*
South Australia	\$200	\$800
Canberra	\$44	\$210
Tasmania	\$60	\$195
New South Wales	\$50	\$2400 *
Northern New South Wales	\$50	\$790
Northern Territory	\$175	\$345
Queensland		
Western Australia	\$110	\$880

\* In Victoria and New South Wales there are elite junior teams within the larger National Premier League clubs and the players pay in excess of \$2000 to participate.



# 2015 Participation Cost by Association Under 6 to Under 12

State	Lowest	Highest
CRJSA	\$58	\$195
ERJSA	\$70	\$115
NSJSA	\$80	\$110
NTJSA	\$95	\$160
Devonport	\$60	\$60
Ulverstone	\$70	\$70
WSSA	\$50	\$75



The costs in Tasmania have remained generally steady over the past few years and FFT has also keep its costs consistent. The minimum cost of participation is around \$60-\$70 per player; however to some extent the maximum increases in line with the size of the associations as per the chart and table on this page.

# Feedback

## Chapter Nine

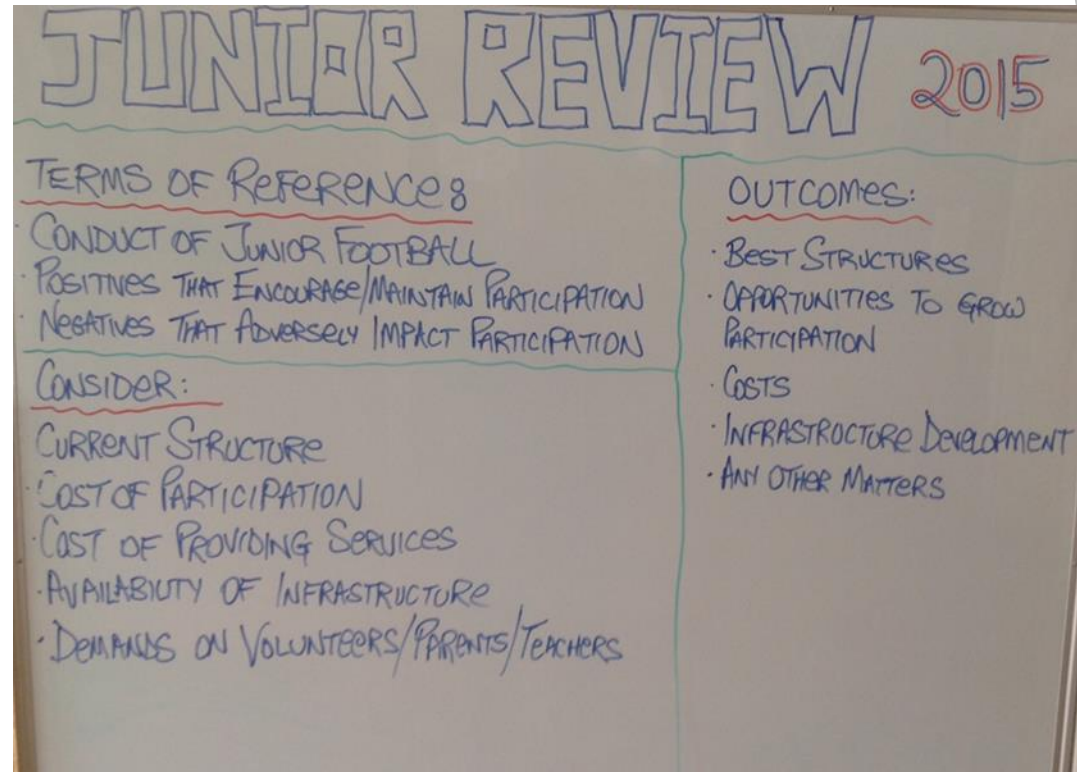
***It's never a problem getting enough children; the issue is retaining them...***

# Forums and Meetings Agenda

A number of public forums and smaller meetings were held as part of the Junior Review. Attendance was based on widely-distributed open invitations and saw a very good cross-section of the football community from association representatives, club presidents and committee members, coaches, technical directors, school representatives, administrators and parents.

The meetings were held strictly in line with the Terms of Reference. The meetings started with an overview of the positives and negatives around junior football in Tasmania. The focus then shifted to structure, participation, costs, infrastructure and the role of volunteers, parents and teachers.

The meeting outcomes were not prompted and alternate opinions were welcomed and noted; there was no attempt to achieve consensus. It is also important to note that while the association-by-association reviews in Chapter Six of this document are the official position of the executive of each junior association, in some cases those views were not necessarily reflected in the open forum discussions.



# Northern Forum held at Churchill Park

Wednesday, 1 July 2015

The biggest positive for junior football in Launceston is the physical proximity of playing. Having a centralised football entity is without doubt the biggest strength and the junior players and parents love going to one place. It has the specific benefit of families bringing their younger children to see the older children; and then the younger ones are encouraged to play. It was widely agreed that Churchill Park has a great atmosphere.

The other significant advantage is that the volunteer capacity is centralised.

The junior clubs structure is a real strength and some have been going for 40 years. This has given a sense of meaning and history. Players train at their own club but then play centrally and they can start at 6 and be around at 16.

The strong consensus was that the club based junior competition at Churchill Park was more united than the school competitions. Football in schools is seen as being a mess with no real structure. One person went as far as to say that the games are a farce. The private school competition is held on Friday's after school.

The Northern Tasmania Junior Soccer Association breaks down school barriers through their club structure and central location. The structure above generates real enthusiasm at a very young age.

The negatives for football in Launceston is that some children don't fit into the structure due to development pathways. There is also a generational perception of the sport from the perspective of fathers. This relates to Australian Rules Football which as the children grow up their dad's want them to play because "it's a mans game".

The country areas surrounding Launceston are dominated by Aussie Rules and there are a very small number of junior football players from these areas. Having said this, football dominates at the younger level and is a lot more even and interactive for children. There is a view that AFL have it wrong for children 11 years and below; however football's problem is keeping the players after 11 years of age.

There was a view that we have completely "over-thought junior football". The removal of state competitions is a negative as the chance to be in representative sides is something that keeps players going. The fact that the southern teams are no longer playing in carnivals has had a big effect on these remaining competitions.

The SAP program is good (via the Northern Development Centre) but the regional competitions didn't have to go. Some clubs have their own academy, but having the SAP within the senior clubs wasn't a good idea. All other clubs then set up skills programs to keep up. This has been rectified with the establishment of the NDC.

Effectively the whole thing is back where it was before, reinforcing the notion that junior football is "over-thought". One of the more interesting points was that - "clubs became like turtles. Worried that players would go to league clubs."

The whole issue is in building the pathway. We need to ensure players form strong relationships within their clubs and then stay. The overall idea must be to make football strong in Launceston.

Whilst the SAP programs have positive aspects the cost is still a disincentive for some young players. The cost was \$60 per term with the two cubs but now it is \$120 per term at the Northern Development Centre.

It was highlighted that the lack of skilled coaches can cause children to leave and particularly when a very athletic player has a “non-coach” then the skill development is much poorer than it should be and it can effect retention at a later stage.

A number of coaches have done coaching courses and certificates and there is a culture of the clubs paying for people to do courses.

The software S2S which is used by Football Federation Tasmania is an excellent tool and could be used to enhance coaching activities. It should be available which would allow all resources to be on iPad not sent to clubs in print form. There was strong agreement that there needs to be more resources to expand player experiences through better activities.

Previously, game training level coaches were given access to S2S. It was free but now clubs have been cut off from the system which is far from ideal. Many coaches are struggling to keep children engaged during training sessions.

The one thing everyone is in agreement with is that the C licence is way too expensive. This is another disincentive for coaches going higher; which is further compounded by the fact that many parent/coaches lack a life-long understanding of the game.

At the SAP coaching licence level there is a strong feeling that training needs to be free and having a skills course in November is too late. The courses need to be done in modules which takes additional time and with everything else it is funded from the bottom up.

The SAP program is more effective with FFT now playing a bigger role in Launceston and there is a feeling that it is all more pro-active. The only negative is a possible perception that the money from the Northern Development Centre is “going down south”.

The next subject discussed in the Northern Forum was the drop-off and it particularly focussed on the current structure in the north which has positives for senior club football but potential negatives for the number of teams at under 16 going into under 18. There are not enough opportunities and it is a selection of the best players that remain. As an example Westside Devils Junior Club has 3 x U16's which progress into 1 x U18 and Launceston City.

It is important to understand that the northern competitions have been re-structured at the request of the clubs to have four divisions playing on Saturday with exactly the same teams in each division. This means that clubs travel en-masse on a home and away basis and this has led to much better match days, less work for volunteers and increased revenues. It is however clearly at odds with growing the number of teams, particularly at under 18's level as the growth would need to be consistent, and mandated, across every club to maintain the new structure.

Senior clubs don't necessarily want to have more teams; however just having one under 18's team per club is a blockage. The suggestion is to have a second under 18 league on a Sunday for those clubs that have multiple teams.

There needs to be a review to ensure that we are not cutting off the opportunity for players to participate. One option may be to work with the un-affiliated Carrick League to provide further opportunities.

Part of any review should be to identify the most appropriate age groups after junior football. In Launceston the junior game currently continues to under 16. One option is to increase the age within the junior clubs and create an under 17's competition which would retain players for an extra year, with only the best one's moving straight to club under 18's.

The subject of carnivals was discussed and it was noted whilst the best players are being steered towards the Northern Development Centre, representative teams are what they look forward to. It is believed that many would be happy to miss the SAP events to play in carnivals again.

There used to be representative teams and a development team and there is still carnivals happening in north and north-west. The successful teams then go to a tournament in Canberra. It feels like there is more chance to play interstate than intra-state.

Under 10's would be an ideal level for state carnivals and there was a view that SAP should be about skills not about a carnival. Four SAP Carnivals per year may be too much.

In the area of infrastructure, it was agreed that Churchill Park could do with more lights. The amount of matches played at the one venue means there is an almost total shut down when weather is bad. Additional lighting would give more options for matches.

In regard to volunteers, there are a small number of active parents in each club. The biggest workload is during the February-April registration period which can be a “nightmare”. It was felt that new people start with good intentions and then do less as the season goes on. There is no solution for easily increasing volunteers numbers; only option is user pays which will price children out of our sport.

The final subject was around Junior Futsal. There was feedback that it could be better managed with the active involvement of NTJSA who weren't involved last year. This has already been taken into account by FFT and registrations have increased in 2015.

The evening was extremely positive and the participants all commented on the fact that FFT were consultative and prepared to listen which was greatly appreciated.



# North-West Forum held at Ulverstone

Tuesday, 30 June 2015

It was agreed at the very start of the meeting that the two big issues are recruitment and retention. As an example club, Ulverstone have 60 younger players and the club believes the under 8 programs have been really good so there is certainly some positive progress in this area.

At the Ulverstone club the MiniRoos brand has been adopted but there hasn't been any changes to the program. It was felt that MiniRoos had increased the numbers but it would have been nice to have more involvement from FFT through the program.

It was identified that there is really no media and no newspaper coverage around junior football and this didn't help with recruitment which predominantly had to be done directly through the schools. This year the children were charged \$85 under the MiniRoos brand for the program which runs all year. In the past the cost has been \$50. The initial contact from FFT was great but then it was left to the clubs and as mentioned, more follow-through from FFT would be greatly appreciated.

Parents remain hard to engage to assist with managing the teams and a grassroots coaching course would be of value.

The most positive thing about junior football is the price. Other sports on the north-west coast have had to drop their registration fees to match soccer. The other positive is that pro-active parents really can be involved with their children and the sport.

In regard to Auskick, the program is seen as just drills. In junior soccer, however, the children play more games and have 10 minutes of skills.

In Ulverstone the girls are predominately kept separate from the boys. There are over 20 girls and well over 50 boys. At Somerset there is never a problem getting enough players; the issue is retaining them.

It was highlighted that there used to be a North-West Committee some 8/10 years ago. It folded and since then high schools haven't been strong with much more of a reliance now on clubs to keep players in the system.

There is a feeling that clubs are in fact losing players from under 14 because they can play at high school. Kids tend to want to play school or club, but not necessarily both and with high school soccer generally being played midweek it can be more convenient to simply play with the school.

For the long-term benefit of football on the coast there is a view that we need to abolish high school football and get children into clubs. One of the drawbacks at the moment is that young players don't know how to get involved with a club. In the past children kept playing from primary school to high school and it worked well.

To a large extent clubs have wanted to get the best players and this meant lots of the less-talented children stopped playing. Then with the elite players some have had too much football too soon and given up.

It is very clear that Australian Rules is strong on the north-west coast. Many of the top junior athletes are going to AFL because there are representative teams. We seem to focus on elite children and leave behind the average players. When children leave primary school they are split up and don't play with their mates. This loss of players is further compounded by the fact that the AFL have a full-time development officer on the north-west coast. The western end of the north-west is a real AFL strong-hold and the promotion to the children is much better by AFL.

A lot of children are playing multiple sports and this creates the opportunity where a single sport like Aussie Rules can grab the players as they get older. To some extent there is a feeling that football is developing skills and teamwork at a young age purely for the benefit of AFL.

Some schools want to help grow football but they don't really engage because quite often the coach comes from a club and the school doesn't want to lose its players to a club either.

The issue of representative side's and carnivals was addressed. There is a feeling that the carnivals have been stopped in Hobart and Launceston by Football Federation Tasmania.

One strong view was that it doesn't matter because representative sides are largely irrelevant until we build the base more.

In regard to structures it is clear that there is a different approach at Devonport, Ulverstone, Burnie and Somerset. It was largely agreed that all four clubs need to work together. Everyone has teams at the same level and whilst under 12 numbers are generally down, the 8's and 9's are much better. It was felt that Ulverstone works well because juniors are with the seniors.

Devonport Junior Soccer Association keeps their under 12's going through to under 13's. One option for everyone is to follow the Launceston model and keep young players together for longer. In Devonport, when they go to clubs they go to 14's.

The stability depends to some extent on the adult commitment to the sport. A good example is at Parklands High School where lots of children played and then it literally stopped completely. The school then got a teacher who played football and suddenly the school was back to 4 teams.

One other factor which works against sport is the generation gaps of parents; with most having children at a later age. There are not as many parents available to support sport as they appear to have less time. People now seem happy to pay for their children to participate so they don't have to volunteer as a parent.

One difference between sports is that football clubs don't send players to the schools; but the AFL clubs do and this feeds the promotion of the sport with young players and assists the transition from football to Aussie Rules at high school level.

Senior club people are working on running their clubs and making them financial; rather than club personnel doing recruitment.

Many parents think the best players should play for Devonport in the Victory League. Devonport have built a good product and this has raised their profile amongst players and their parents.

A further barrier is that there is no pathway for the girls. Many of the young ones are playing up in seniors; in most cases to make up the numbers. A review of the female structure would be very useful with the possible introduction of a second division of girls played as 9v9; in fact all ladies football could even be 8v8.

The discussion moved on to infrastructure and Ulverstone indicated that they are starting to run out of grounds. Devonport juniors all play at Meercroft Park, however that venue could really use lighting. Generally speaking under 16's and under 14's play at all different grounds and in Devonport there is little or no use of Valley Road for juniors. Western Schools have enough grounds and they have worked closely with the Council to ensure this remains the case.

In regard to costs, Ulverstone pay a much higher rental fee. Whilst the club is active in fundraising and can maintain lower fees off the back of this, the rent has risen to around \$8,000. The club has put the local council on notice and asked them whether they want the Ulverstone Soccer Club here or not! The goal is to keep registrations steady and costs down.

It was agreed that clubs need to publicise themselves more. The lower age groups are growing but the higher ages are about the same. In something of a return to the past, schools don't let children play until under 8's.

It is clear that growth in the future is based on the link into clubs. This is the key!



# Southern Forum held at KGV Park

Monday, 29 June 2015

The southern forum opened with a discussion on the positives of junior football. The first point was the ability of children to start playing at a young age which helps gets people into sport. The current primary school model gets children started early and football is certainly a part of school culture. It was suggested that up to 70% of children play football at some stage including lunch times.

It was highlighted that northern suburbs schools find it a little more difficult. This is on the basis that school teams are run by parents and there may not be quite as much engagement in some areas.

It was agreed that the most significant positive is that it is the easiest sport for young ones to play and this is one of the reason that the numbers at the earlier age groups remain strong.

One of the issues, of course, remains the capacity for parents to manage teams and some remain a committee of one. This is an example at Lauderdale where 140 children play but the number of adults actively organising the teams is very small.

Finance will remain one of the issues and particularly this season with the cost of the Working with Children checks which was partly funded by Central Region. Some schools also provide rebates to assist with the funding of their teams.

One area which requires review is the costs associated with ground usage in the Hobart City Council municipality. Junior football uses a large number of facilities and there must be the opportunity to negotiate a collective arrangement to reduce the overall costs.

A number of negatives re: participation were highlighted and this included the fact that registration takes place between February and April and in general no spots are available once the season starts. Overall capacity, particularly in Central Region, is an issue and in most cases teams are set and can't take extra players once the season has started.

One point that was raised is that junior football players are happy to play other sports. It needs to be accepted that a percentage of players are going to drop off, but equally important to recognise that junior football competitions are fully accessible.

A common theme that was raised was in relation to retaining less-skilled players. The system appears to operate on the basis that at several levels there is a desire to only take the most skilled players forward. This is one of the criticisms of SAP and also a factor of the capacity of senior clubs to take players.

One of the issues in regard to retention in the sport is ensuring that parents actually understand the pathways. Many are not aware that there is no football at high schools and the children and parents get a surprise they can't play there. There was a view expressed that FFT's Football Participation Officers need to be talking about pathways at an early stage. It could equally be said that this task should be shared by clubs and indeed everyone in the football community.

In some cases the children are concerned that they can't play club because they are not good enough and this leads to further confusion around the structure and the associated pathways. There needs be more work on educating the average parent/coach. As a positive example Lindisfarne juniors invite clubs to talk to children at a social function.

There was significantly more discussion regarding SAP in the Southern Forum than in any other meetings regarding junior football in Tasmania. The first point that was made is that skills are not taught at a young enough age and there is a view amongst some that “it can be done later”. In many cases the parent/coaches are not equipped to be developing players skills to a high level.

It was thought that children who miss real development at the various levels will struggle when they reach the time to participate in SAP.

Derwent United are an example where they have little qualified support for juniors, but have within their club a number of players with a lot of skill. They are keen to use trainers from other SAP programs, however most SAP coaches are volunteers and this would require an extra workload.

Several people expressed the view that SAP works well, however it appears that the numbers of players involved are lower than when there were just junior development programs.

The current system has created a large difference between SAP and non-SAP clubs and better talented players who wish to continue in the sport will most likely go to clubs with accredited coaches. There is a feeling that if clubs aren't strong then players will leave and that there needs to be fairness and equality across clubs.

To some extent the reverse is also true that not all SAP players are stars. Kingborough Lions have identified this issue and operate two streams within their youth development; one aimed at high performance and one at participation. They believe that this helps with a pathway to the club. All players still have the opportunity to play with school teams then go to SAP.

A separate view was also expressed that SAP should be inclusive and provide better coaching for everyone. It was also mentioned that many 9-10 year olds and above are doing 5+ hours of football a week which can be a lot.

A separate challenge that was identified during the forum was the level of competitiveness within junior games. The guiding principal is to make sure all players have an enjoyable social experience and have the opportunity to participate in the match. This is at odds with the attitude of some teams and parents.

A few examples were given to highlight the point and one of the most notable was within a team that knew their leading goalscorer had scored 89 goals and they had been counted even though this was in a competition that didn't keep scores, didn't have winners and obviously had no league table.

The view that was expressed was that teams need to make it fair. It was noted that some parents have a competitive streak and this carries over into the way their team plays. Of course, in their defence, it is very much part of the Australian-ethos to be competitive and winning at each level, even juniors, and this was something that was wholly acceptable back with the current parents generation. This needs to be handled carefully and it is all about educating parents. It was felt that this was best done by interacting as a group with parents rather than individually singling people out. It is important to remember that parents are also clients of football and without parents being involved there are no children, so their needs to be a consistent mechanism to address parents' approach.

It was felt that part of the solution is to create a more engaged and friendly partnership between teams. This could include introducing teams to each other and also have parents monitor every touch that children have during matches to ensure this is fair as well. It's a matter of having everyone understand that their children are playing together, with each other, rather than against each other.

This could also be helped by finding additional opportunities for juniors to meet senior players, interact with people from senior clubs and perhaps play more matches at half-time of senior games. All of this provides enjoyable opportunities to play outside the normal schedule and these aren't seen as competitive matches.

There was significant discussion regarding structure and there are a large number of alternative views. One opinion was that there are not enough Associations. There used to be interaction between Committees however the last Junior Standing Committee was 2013. At one time Central Region was the smallest, however they did away with points and the competitive nature of the sport and got stronger.

On the other hand, it was expressed during the forum that there could be one big association in Hobart that manages all junior football. This could start with a combined under 12 competition across all three junior associations in Hobart. It may also be possible to split the younger players up by their suburban location rather than playing in large associations with an element of travel.

Getting the structure of the teams and various grades correct was seen as a priority and for most competitions there are between 4-6 grading rounds.

Mixing boys and girls is also good when they are younger and this can be positive up to under 10's. Once the boys become bigger and stronger they are much less likely to pass to the girls. Some girls lost interest as the boys got better. It may be important to structure more teams to include girls and all-girls teams at a younger junior age can act as a magnet to joining the sport.

It was also felt that girls like access to female coaches and this is also a positive in regard to both recruitment and retention. One of the more interesting points was that girls enter the sport at different ages and stages. Also, girls play in age groups rather than being grouped by their ability and there might be an opportunity to improve their opportunities to participate evenly in this area.

The discussion moved on to costs and it was highlighted that there is a huge difference between junior and youth football. The jump in price is a potential barrier to retention after junior football.

It was felt that compared with other activities we are cheap. Some associations have incentives including charging less for a second child in families.

There is a spread of fees and a big variation in costs between teams based on where you play and what coaching you receive. Obviously, where schools underwrite their teams the costs are much lower than those within a club environment.

It was felt that there could be a better job in "selling" the price to parents who hear the fee but don't understand what it represents. Also, upfront money can be a real issue. There is a demand for upfront payments because Football Federation Tasmania require registrations to be paid this way.

Overall it is not an expensive sport. Clubs have broadly different costs and also the market rate can dictate the fees. One of the issues is that clubs can't always guarantee service due to lack of available grounds.

It also needs to be remembered that at 12 years of age children are changing schools and this alone represents a greater cost for parents before they consider the fees associated with playing sport. This is particularly relevant when you look at the competition provided by Australian Rules Football at the high school age and you remember that AFL has a top down funding model which is not available to football.

There was a discussion on the relationship between facilities and participation. It is clear that Central Region is operating at capacity whilst there is plenty of opportunities to host more matches on the Eastern Shore.

Central Region currently play some matches on the eastern shore at Olympia Warriors FC who are members of Central Region.

There was a view expressed that there should be more use of grounds across associations and if this were to occur then older ages will travel. Having made that point there were a number of people who believe that players will be lost if they are forced to travel outside their area regularly and particularly from one side of the river to the other.

Whilst the proposed development at Cambridge provides additional opportunities it was understood that there would only be four-five additional pitches in the first phase and these were in a region which already had a large amount of spare capacity.

It was suggested that we would be better to try and identify indoor venues for training during the winter months to ensure less interruption to the children's football experience due to weather. This prompted a brief discussion on whether there should be competitions in the summer particularly for the younger children.

In regard to volunteers it was conceded that there will never be enough. It is always a struggle to get people to help. It was felt that organisation need to be easier and this could be done by identifying ways to make the activities of volunteers more efficient as well as understanding tasks that would be better done at a higher level. It was also noted that one of the positives of the SAP programs are that they bring more dedicated parents.

It was suggested that if there was a need to do extra tasks that people could be paid on the basis of a small levy on top of registrations. This of course further cements the user-pays model which may not be totally ideal.

It was felt that there could be efficiencies by lobbying councils to do the right thing, particularly around ground preparation and line markings. The downside is that over time the councils may integrate these costs into ground rental agreements.

A question was asked about whether one organisation could provide all the services. It was accepted though that many roles still needed to be completed by volunteers. It was also noted that the requirements on volunteers are high particularly in relation to Working with Children and coaching qualifications.

It was felt that Football Federation Tasmania could assist clubs with administration by approving all registrations on behalf of clubs; however there are some issues regarding this suggestion particularly as clubs need to confirm who is actually going to be finally registered before FFT bill the clubs.

The clubs have to check every child has paid and has a birth certificate. There are currently two registration databases with one for Central Region and one for everyone else. If FFT could look at streamlining and resolving issues around registration this would help.

It was also felt that Sport and Recreation should provide assistance to clubs in regard to administration and grants.

In regard to coaching it was agreed that fees associated with coaching qualifications need to come down. This may encourage more people to become qualified and operate at the younger levels. It was felt that at least 75% of the entire experience of the players related to the quality and attitude of the coaches.

The final part of the discussion was around junior carnivals and in principal there was general opposition to the carnivals and not a strong desire at all to see them return. It was felt that regional carnivals are adversarial, competitive and wholly anti-development. If they were to continue it was suggested that they be played in a round-robin format without finals so there are no winners.



# Girls in Football

Chapter Ten

***Enjoyment rates highly in nearly every study on the reasons why girls play sport...***

# Womensport and Recreation Tasmania

Womensport and Recreation Tasmania (WSRT) is a non-government organisation which claims to be the leading advocate for females in sport and recreation in Tasmania. The organisation works with their partners to build capacity, leadership skills and knowledge to increase the representation of women and girls at all levels of sport and active recreation.

As such, they have taken the opportunity to make a submission towards this review and given that the focus of their organisation is women's sport this submission is focused on girls in football.

WSRT recognises that if participation is maintained through adolescence, girls (and boys) are also more likely to be active as adults. Given the benefits of this not just to the sustainability of the sport, but also to the general health of the population, WSRT is encouraged that Football Federation Tasmania is taking a proactive step to identify the reasons behind the drop-off rate for youth in football.



The issue of adolescents dropping out of sport more generally has been recognised for a number of decades now. Various studies both in Australia and abroad have noted this trend since the 1970s and 1980s and a number of reports have been written on the subject. A broad review in 1988 concluded that sports withdrawal was a complex issue - and it remains so today. There is likely to be more than one factor at play in deciding whether or not to continue participating in sport; or the factors will differ between people. Therefore there is no 'silver bullet' or one reason behind this; however some of the issues at play can be explored and we can use some of this information to improve rates of participation.

As far as WSRT is aware, there has been no comprehensive research in Tasmania either of a particular sport or sport in general and participation rates of youth. Therefore, this submission is based upon various other reports from Australia and around the world. Some are focused on football and others are on different sports - however we believe some of the lessons can easily translate to football in Tasmania.

In general, there are some common motivations and barriers for girls and boys to participate in sport, however there are also some key differences between the sexes. In a 2013 study focusing on youth football it was found that not enjoying sport, wanting more time for non-sport activities, and interference from other sports are shared reasons that both boys and girls leave organised sports.

Lessons from this may be that trying to make sport more enjoyable and ensuring that sport can be undertaken at flexible times (or times that do not conflict with other sports) in order to assist retention rates across junior football generally.

Positive features that encourage and maintain participation and those negative features that adversely impact on the participation or enjoyment of the game by those involved in junior football is a key part of the Football Federation Tasmania's Terms of Reference. In relation to girls in sport, these include issues around health benefits of sport, enjoyment, issues with coaching staff and provision of facilities, skills, family involvement, body image and the media. Each of these will be looked at in further detail and recommendations to address these issues will be included where relevant.

**Physical exercise and health:** A number of studies have emphasized that one of the key motivators for girls undertaking organised sport is for reasons of health and fitness. In some cases, this is one of the top three reasons for girls doing sport.

This is particularly important as it is also recognised that if participation is maintained through adolescence, girls (and boys) are also likely to be active as adults. This is of course critical for both maintaining interest in football, but also for the general health and wellbeing of our population.

Enjoyment rates highly in nearly every study on the reasons why girls play sport. Conversely, if sport is no longer fun, it is one of the biggest reasons for drop out.

What is 'fun' or 'enjoyable' is a fairly subjective notion and therefore studies that do not explore this in more detail do not give us much more information to use in order to change practices.

However one of the ways in which sport no longer becomes 'fun', particularly for girls, is when competition increases. This is particularly an issue because whether or not girls feel 'good at sport' is a huge factor in whether they decide to participate. The fear of being teased or of looking stupid is a big barrier for girls - and much more so than for boys.

This can account for the drop out often occurring at high school. In primary school sport and activity tends to be 'fun' rather than competitive, and most people feel they are able to participate to an extent. At high school, sport tends to be more competitive and the idea that you have to be 'good at sport' to take part kicks in, especially for adolescent girls.

When sport becomes more about talent identification than playing for love of the game, girls tend to be discouraged, particularly those who do not identify themselves as having the skills or being good at the game.

Often, fun and enjoyment for girls comes from the opportunity to have a social time and interact with friends during sport.

**Coaching staff and investment:** Some studies identify that the coach is key to participation. One study rated the third highest reason for drop out as "didn't like the coach". In a study focusing specifically on youth and football, negative coaching experiences were again seen as one of the key reasons for girls dropping out - and this was markedly more so for girls than for boys.

In addition, some girls feel that there are unequal opportunities given to them. They see that boys have better programs, better coaches and better development and pathway opportunities and this leads them to drop out.

**Skills:** The perception that girls have of themselves that they lack skills or competence is another reason some studies have found for them dropping out. Conversely, skill development and demonstrating competence can be motivators. Often, girls who identify as 'sporty' are skilful all-rounders who play a variety of sports and are confident in their sporting abilities.

**Family involvement:** The influence of family is a primary motivator and barrier for girls in sport. In general, mothers who play sport act as role models and their daughters are more likely to participate than children of mothers who do not play sport. In addition, for non-traditional sports particularly, the influence of fathers and brothers is immense. Girls find that they bond with their male family members over these sports. Conversely, where a family does not encourage girls to be involved, they tend not to play.

**Body image and perceptions of femininity and masculinity:** A South Australian study found that body image was a big concern for girls. They also found that girls were being teased by both boys and other girls and that this was a big reason for discontinuing with sport.

It has also been found that ideas of what is feminine and masculine persist. That is, that girls in Australia are very much aware of a perception that it is not cool or feminine for girls to play sport. For some girls, this depended on the sport being played (some were viewed as more feminine than others) but they also worried about becoming too 'manly' through playing sport. This is a problem with body image as displayed through the media.

**Media:** Like everyone, girls are affected by the images and stories that they see in the media every day. In Australia we are still in a situation where less than 10% of sports media coverage is devoted to women's sports. When women's sports are included, images that are portrayed are often giving the message that just 'sporty' types can take part.

It has been found that generally team sports are seen as more masculine than individual sports; and sports where aggression is needed or displayed are also seen as masculine. One positive for football is that recent success of Women's Football World Cup has started to change the perception of football as being masculine to becoming a gender 'neutral' sport. Media is also problematic for girls in the way it portrays unattainable or unrealistic body images.

In closing Womensport & Recreation Tasmania has provided the following summary of recommendations:



1	Promote the health and fitness benefits of football to girls.
	Fun should be a priority for all ages, but there is a need to differentiate the focus depending on age group. For younger girls, focus on learning skills. For older girls, focus on non-competitive activities.
3	Devote some time at training for team building exercises, or schedule time away from training to meet up and catch up.
	Ensure that coaching staff are aware of the particular barriers and motivators for girls. Where possible, explore the option of female coaches for girls' teams.
5	Ensure that facilities and programs are of an equal standard for boys and girls.
	Whilst talent identification is important, ensure that playing for fun and social experience is also encouraged. Sessions for beginners so that they feel they are in an environment where they can learn skills without pressure to already be 'good' at sport are critical.
7	Encourage family days where parents or siblings take part
	Encourage single sex sessions
9	Ensure that sporting uniforms are comfortable
	Change perceptions of the sport through advertising and media campaigns. Promote the idea that everyone can take part (not just 'sporty' girls).

# Infrastructure

## Chapter Eleven

***The issue is ensuring that the right capacity exists  
in each area...***

One of the principal issues to be addressed within the Junior Review is infrastructure, principally as it relates to playing facilities and pitches. There has been a view that there is not enough “pieces of grass” to accommodate football in Tasmania and a lot of potential players and matches are lost. There is certainly some truth in this premise but it is not perhaps as wide-spread an issue as first thought.

In looking at the issues on a whole-of-Tasmania basis it is clear that there are easily sufficient grounds to host junior football. The issue is ensuring that the right capacity exists in each area. Looking at the availability of pitches on a region-by-region basis identifies where the demand issues arise.

On the north-west coast there is substantial availability in the Burnie, Somerset, Wynyard area and capacity to double the number of games that are played if necessary.

In Devonport there is also spare room at Meercroft Park and the ability to take more players and teams, whilst in Ulverstone things are beginning to become tight, but this is as much an issue around the attitude of the council in regard to access and costs as it is in pure number of pitches.

Launceston has the perfect scenario at Churchill Park and whilst they would like to see a level of upgrading there is room to substantially increase the number of teams and matches on a weekly basis. There still remains the issue of ground closures due to weather and this has an impact on training during the week particularly for the Northern Development Centre.

As explained throughout this report, Hobart is divided into three associations. Both the Eastern Region and Northern Suburbs have more than enough pitches for the number of players and in the case of Eastern Region they feel that they could double the number of players they have and still be able to accommodate them.

This of course leaves Central Region which is the biggest junior association in the state. The numbers of players have reached a point where they are basically at capacity in both the Hobart area and also within Kingborough. This most recent season has been difficult, particularly with the closure of the playing fields on the Domain. Central Region has reacted by scheduling games at later timeslots and reducing the number of players in some games to satisfy demand.

Meetings have taken place between Central Region, FFT and the State Government to look at possibilities and the government has made contact with the City of Hobart on Central Region’s behalf. There was no immediate solution found and there is no specific long-term infrastructure plan for City-of-Hobart football facilities. This was also the position when the FFT Board conducted feasibility studies into locating a junior precinct within the south of the state, leading to the Cambridge all-weather junior precinct project.

The most interesting point in regard to their lack of grounds is that Central Region have been offered places to play by both Eastern Region and Northern Suburbs but have decided not to take advantage of the spare capacity in these areas.

There are some Central Region games played at Warrior Park in Warrane, however this occurs only because Olympia FC Warriors junior teams play within Central Region. It has been made very clear that Central Region’s intention is to play games on the western shore and identify opportunities within their own associations geographic area to grow the number of available pitches.

On the basis of the many meetings and discussions associated with the Junior Review the issue of a lack of facilities is fundamentally a Central Region problem.

It is something that the association is attempting to address but the solution is currently something of a “jigsaw-puzzle” of trying to get the appropriate number of matches onto the available pitches within their own area. As mentioned there is no enthusiasm to access additional available facilities outside their region.

As a further part of the Junior Review discussions about infrastructure have taken place with Meander Valley, Launceston, Devonport, Clarence and Kingborough councils as well as Sport & Recreation Tasmania and the Premiers Department.

There appears to be a level of sympathy and underlying goodwill regarding the issue of adding pitches and providing better facilities. Meander Valley are working on a full upgrade of Prospect Park which would make football an even more significant tenant. Launceston are interested in helping Northern Rangers and have also had early discussions regarding an artificial surface somewhere within their boundaries.

Kingborough have a severe shortage of grounds for all sports and have identified a new area of land on which they are intending to do a feasibility study for a new sports area. Clarence are completing Kangaroo Bay as an improved sporting area as well as working with Olympia FC Warriors and Clarence United FC on upgrades to their facilities. In addition, Clarence are working closely with FFT on Cambridge Park.

Finally, the Devonport Council have just completed a major upgrade to Valley Road which includes a large artificial surface that has multiple configurations and can host two matches as well as training simultaneously.



# Skills Acquisition Program

Chapter Twelve

***Provide the players with the opportunity, in a match environment, to express the skills they have been taught...***

Skills Acquisition Programs (SAP) were an initiative of Football Federation Australia and were launched in 2011. The purpose of SAP is to provide enhanced training and development for the younger skilled players through the 9-12 age groups. To begin with this was centralised and conducted by Football Federation Tasmania on behalf of FFA.

In 2013 the program was decentralised through pilot programs within Devonport Strikers and Kingborough Lions. Following this successful pilot clubs were then invited to apply for a licence to operate their own SAP programs. At the beginning of 2014 nine clubs were awarded licences by FFT. In simple terms the criteria for being successfully awarded a licence was the need to have qualified coaches, access to year-around facilities and a twelve-month training plan.

The nine clubs that received licences were the eight PS4 Victory League clubs plus Nelson Eastern Suburbs.

Each SAP program within the nine clubs is able to charge a separate fee, above player registrations, for participation in their program. These fees range from \$5 per visit at Glenorchy Knights through to a monthly fee at other clubs. The overall costs ranges from \$40-\$120 per month depending on the clubs and number of sessions. Clubs are free to set their own prices. Knights do it on a session-by-session cost as this is more appropriate for the region they serve.

The number of players participating in SAP programs has remained between 400-500 over the past two seasons.

The program is seen as being highly effective within the clubs who operate SAP and in fact the success has led to additional demand for SAP licences to be issued to more clubs. FFT's view is that SAP should be fully reviewed at the end of the 2016 season with a plan to grow the program if the capacity exists. It is however critical that the current standards be maintained as a minimum.

To create opportunities for the players in SAP a number of festivals were created. Currently there are four state-based festivals with one each in Devonport, Launceston, Glenorchy and Kingborough and these are hosted by the respective club programs under the direction of FFT.

The purpose of the festivals is to provide the players with the opportunity to express the skills they have been taught in a match environment. They are also used for identification of future talent to progress into the Skilleroos and Skillerettes programs. The matches within the festivals are competitive in regard to the quality of play but are non-results based and games do not have referees.

There has been some concern that the formation of SAP has led to a situation where some of the less-talented players are left behind and the clubs are now focussing on bringing through either those who have superior skills or those whose parents can afford for them to be in the program.

From FFT's perspective the SAP programs are open to all, however it is generally those children who are motivated to attend the programs and these tend to be the more talented who are enjoying their football experience and see a future pathway in the sport. The less talented often see the game as purely social at the younger levels and are not nearly as motivated to go into a much more regular skills based training program like SAP.

The other concern expressed around SAP is that it is not a positive development environment for girls. This view is held because SAP is at the age where boys are becoming physically stronger and girls are becoming more self aware and are less inclined to wanting to be competing head-to head with the boys.

FFT have recognised this significant issues and begun working with the programs to market themselves to be more open to female players and conduct girls' only SAP sessions. There is also the opportunity to reduce the SAP training load for girls as they are not always keen or committed to do as much as the boys in many cases.

FFT have taken a lead role in the SAP space nationally and each February conduct the National SAP Festival. Over the last three years this event has been held in Launceston and grown to be an important part of the national football calendar. In 2016 the intention is to continue to grow the Festival and this will be done as part of a relocation to Devonport with the full support of the Devonport Council.

Overall SAP is seen as being a success in regard to improving the developmental and technical qualities of players. Since the inception in 2011 a number of players have begun to progress into national squads and training camps. Most notable is Eduardo Castaneda who came through the initial centralised SAP program and was recently Captain of Australia's Under 16 team that played in Cambodia.

The further strength of the program is highlighted by the fact that a number of additional clubs are keen to receive licences. FFT's strategy has been to limit the number to maintain the quality and create a level of competition in the development and skills training space rather than on the pitch.



# MiniRoos

## Chapter Thirteen



AIA Vitality MiniRoos is the umbrella brand for entry level football programs for children aged 4-11 years. Introduced in 2014 and officially launched with inaugural naming rights sponsor, AIA Vitality, on 3 February 2015.

The goal is to strengthen football's position within the junior grassroots sporting market across Australia. Previous initiatives suffered from poor brand recognition, inconsistent delivery and high dropout rate compared to Auskick, in2CRICKET and NetSetGO.

MiniRoos Club Football covers the 4v4, 7v7 and 9v9 game formats played by children aged under 7, under 9 and under 11 respectively. Formats have already been adopted by Tasmania's junior associations, although not all are currently using the MiniRoos branding.

MiniRoos Kick-Off is a fun game-based skills introductory program for boys and girls aged 4-9 who are new to the game, designed to complement and feed into MiniRoos Club Football. MiniRoos for Girls provides both MiniRoos Kick-Off and MiniRoos Club Football on a girls-only basis, for those who don't wish to participate in the mixed format.

Ben Horgan has taken the role of MiniRoos Development Officer for FFT. This is done in full cooperation with Football Federation Australia who make a contribution to costs of a MiniRoos Development Officer in each State.

MiniRoos has become the all-encompassing branding for any junior football activity which includes Sporting Schools, grassroots course delivery, school visits and gala days. In the perfect scenario any football activity, including all matches, for players up to the age of eleven should be branded with MiniRoos.

In Tasmania it has been difficult to establish kick-off centres as the costs associated with the 6-12 week introductory program are similar to the total cost of simply playing a full seasons of club/school football. FFA are very aware that this program with its national pricing model is not appropriate for Tasmania; therefore we have agreed to take a different approach.

The first step is to introduce MiniRoos into areas where club football is not readily accessible. The second option is for FFT to deliver the kick-off programs directly rather than engaging coaches through clubs and attracting additional costs.

There seems to be growing interest in areas around Tasmania not traditionally active in the sport and this has been supported by the introduction of MiniRoos.

MiniRoos is promoted largely through half-time activities at A-League games and FFT is looking to introduce MiniRoos branded activities during half-time in PS4 National Premier League Tasmania matches in 2016.

# Football Participation Officers

Chapter Fourteen

***Deliver more consistent work opportunities for Football Participation Officers...***

The Football Participation Officer (FPO) program has been a key part of Football Federation Tasmania's contribution to game and player development in the school's environment.

The FPO's are paid on a part-time basis in relation to the number of school visits and sessions they complete. In 2014 there were eight FPO's and the goal was to deliver a football experience to as many school children as possible. Over the course of the year this reached 14,000 children which was well above the 10,000 performance threshold that had been agreed with Sport & Recreation Tasmania as a key performance indicator linked to funding. The success was based on the quality and consistent availability of the individuals that performed the FPO roles.

In 2015 it was decided by the Board of Football Federation Tasmania to re-focus the program to achieve quality rather than quantity and to work much closer with the parent/coaches that have control of individual primary school programs and teams. Ideally the goal was to achieve higher levels of engagement, coach assistance and player experience and improvement.

The program has achieved many of the goals however there have been severe complications in regard to getting individuals to perform the FPO roles; which has occurred for a number of reasons. The loss of Tim Lunnon (who was virtually full-time) to the State as well as many of the players who performed the task in 2015 left something of a gap to fill. There have been four regular FPO's in 2015 plus FFT's MiniRoos Manager Ben Horgan and Women's Development Officer Rani Cavarretta.

Ben focussed his efforts on the east coast of Tasmania and worked with coaches and players at Swansea, Triabunna and St Helens, whilst Rani rolled out additional programs across the girls football space.

The lower number of FPO's has led to a fairly significant reduction in the number of visits and ultimately the number of children receiving additional football experiences. As indicated retention of FPO's is an issue and it has been difficult to find people available during the ideal 3pm-4pm window to work with primary school teams and coaches.

The FPO's need a certain level of development to be able to conduct sessions alone and as they need to work with coaches they must have some ability and experience around the operation of a team and the management of coaching sessions. To streamline the program there has been an attempt to take out some school visits and work directly with the junior clubs on increasing their capacity and expertise. This endeavour has suffered from a low-level of take up by clubs. Interestingly, Cygnet and Huon Valley have been amongst the most proactive clubs.

In addition, the program has been severely hampered by the introduction of the Working with Children checks. Obviously this is a positive step towards ensuring the protection of our participants but it has played havoc with the FPO program. The reason for this is that it can take up to six weeks for a Tasmanian resident to receive their clearance. For overseas players it can take many, many months. In the past the program has relied on overseas players brought in for the Victory League, however this year none of them were able to get their clearance in time to assist. One international player, Daniel Syson, was extremely keen to help all season and applied for his Working with Children clearance at the first opportunity but by seasons end he was still waiting.

There has also been another initiative in this area with the introduction by the Federal Government of *Sporting Schools* which launched during term 3 of 2015.

The Sporting Schools program provides funding to schools to allow them to book coaches and programs for their students and to some extent it replaces the Active After Schools programs. This new initiative puts the choice of sports and the bookings into the hands of the schools.

Each sport registers on a central database which also has a list of coaches, or in our case FPO's, that can be booked by the schools. FFT are registered as a coach provider on the system and manage the bookings. FFT then invoice the schools and pay the coaches. It should be noted that it is also possible for other providers such as private academies to list coaches on the data base and effectively set-up in opposition to state sporting bodies to deliver services.

Going forward, and in the perfect world, the FPO's would do more Sporting Schools sessions which would achieve the necessary visitation levels but would also reduce FFT's costs in this area as the FPO's would be paid by the schools.

Following an internal review, the ideal scenario is to have a smaller number of FPO's doing a lot more regular work so that to some extent the role becomes more of a job. Also, the FPO's don't get paid for administration work particularly if they are involved in Sporting Schools, so that area is being covered within the FFT office.

FFT is currently promoting Sporting Schools during its visits with a view to encouraging as many schools as possible to take advantage of the program and the available government funding.

In summary FFT need to grow the program in 2016 and combine it directly with Sporting Schools to deliver more consistent work opportunities for Football Participation Officers and also use this to further promote the MiniRoos across gala days and grassroots coaching which fall under the MiniRoos program.



# Report findings and recommendations

Chapter Fifteen

***There is no one-size fits all model that is appropriate for the organisation of junior football...***

It is virtually impossible to make any substantial, direct recommendations at this stage of the review that can be immediately acted on and delivered. In large part this is because the junior associations are in control of their own structure and operation and any changes need to be done as part of a more detailed and focused consultation and negotiation process.

The approach to addressing each of the specific issues is to resolve them separately rather than getting bogged down in big-picture discussions which have already occurred. FFT will go back to the key stakeholders and provide them a further opportunity to make a tangible contribution to the various deliverables and action items. The intention is to tackle specific issues in selected regions rather than having widespread forums on multiple subjects. The results of the next phase will then be shared across key stakeholders for review and possible implementation.

The one consistent element that came through every meeting was that associations, clubs, players, coaches, parents, teachers and volunteers really appreciated the opportunity to contribute and be listened to in regard to Junior Football and the next steps allow this positive and welcome process to continue in a meaningful way.

The terms of reference require this preliminary report to be presented on the basis of five sections as follows:

### **1. The ‘best’ structure or structures for junior football in Tasmania**

It is immediately apparent from every meeting and discussion that has been held that there is no “one-size fits all” model that is appropriate for the management, organisation and delivery of junior football in Tasmania.

If the question is, which is the best structure, then without any doubt that is the one operated by the Northern Tasmanian Junior Soccer Association in Launceston. It has a single centralised location, a strong family atmosphere, a limited number of junior clubs and players can continue for longer in the same environment. To some extent this allows the structure to “beat the cliff”.

A similar structure exists in Devonport however the children effectively play for a single association and have a pathway to one senior club. The chances for a bottle-neck to be created which only sees the most talented players progress is high; although there are options to integrate with Ulverstone.

The most concerning environment is further along the north-west coast with Burnie, Somerset and Wynyard where the structure is “neither here nor there” and in effect the schools competition and club matches are in competition with each other.

In Hobart there seems to be a level of stability brought about by larger playing numbers, additional financial capacity and access to more parents and volunteers.

At this stage it is important to take a step back and look at the specific issues concerning each association.

The first key point to make is that the differences in approach to junior football on a regional-basis and therefore the issues were starkly different between associations. This was particularly true in the three major public forums where the conversations went down vastly different paths.

To represent this in the briefest possible summary, the tone of the meeting in the south of the state was focussed on player development, in the north it was around centralised enjoyment and stability and in the north-west about playing numbers and the survival of the senior clubs. These differences are in direct positive correlation to the numbers of participants.

As a further example of the most efficient structure; in Launceston the association believes that the current club structure at junior level works well and the central location for playing all matches really helps. The alignment to senior clubs creates a pathway for players to continue in the sport. This has led to a focus of the bigger clubs on junior soccer.

The biggest issue of concern, which is being worked through at the moment is that as the junior competitions end with under 16’s, there are currently not enough teams for under 18’s within the senior club structure.

Conversely there is a different view in the northern suburbs of Hobart where the association would not like the junior clubs to be integrated with the Victory League clubs. It is the preferred position to maintain self-governance of junior teams.

In Central Region it can be argued that the association has become too big in a geographic sense and splitting the northern and southern ends of their area into more manageable competitions might be well worth contemplating. This is particularly relevant given the growth in the Kingborough and Channel areas over recent years.

The structure in the Eastern Region of Hobart is also very sound and relies on a suburban-based format which has junior clubs that work fairly exclusively with their local primary schools. The problem seems to be that this is done in almost total isolation from the rest of the sport. There is literally no club involvement or relationships on the eastern shore and this has led to a situation where junior players have no idea re: options for continuing to play or indeed even the name of their local club.

In regard to the north-west coast there is the view that for the long-term benefit of football we need to abolish high school football and get players into clubs. The senior clubs in this area have no confidence about playing numbers from year-to-year and have a great concern that they might not be sustainable from a playing perspective. In many cases youth players are allocated to teams to fill the numbers rather than being in a defined pathway that makes sense for their age and ability. It is a numbers game and the clubs do not have the numbers even though the sport is very popular amongst juniors.

Perhaps the most telling structural issue of all is the relationship between senior clubs and junior associations. On the whole there is no plans or even discussion around transition and continuation in the sport between senior clubs and junior associations. Clubs will take the best players but don't want to be involved on a day-to-day basis in junior football. There was a consistent view across the state that the senior clubs should be significantly more involved.

One of the drawbacks at the moment is that young players don't know how to get involved with a club. In the past children kept playing from primary school to high school and it worked well.

To a large extent clubs have wanted to get the best players and this meant lots of the less-talented children stopped playing. Then with the elite players some have had too much football too soon and given up.

In fairness to the senior clubs it then becomes a capacity issue and many of them have a limit to the amount of work they can do in this area. Most are focussed on running large clubs that already have excessive demands on volunteers, parents, players and coaches.

The strong view is that all senior clubs need to participate in the development and management of junior football and this doesn't happen across the board. The big clubs need to resource-up to do juniors. Junior associations believe that each senior club needs someone who wants to look after the players and transition them through into the club environment and youth football.

Actions include:

1. Meet with the four eastern shore senior clubs to determine the most effective way to link them directly to the junior association, junior clubs, schools and players on the eastern shore.
2. Convene a forum on the far north-west coast to directly discuss the structure between clubs and schools.
3. Conduct a high-level meeting between the three Hobart associations to discuss the overall structure.
4. Convene a meeting with Northern Suburbs Junior Association to discuss the drop-off between 12-13 year olds and work through the concept of how we would more easily identify those children that are pre-disposed to continuing in the sport.

5. Convene a forum of Hobart's National Premier League clubs to further discuss their relationship to junior football and the tangible ways in which they may better integrate at a grassroots level.

*\* As mentioned in the introduction to this section; the intention is to deal with specific issues with selected associations/clubs in the first instance, as above, and then share the results across key stakeholders.*

### **Opportunities to enhance and grow participation;**

Under this subject the actual issue seems to be more around retention than participation and growth. Whilst the numbers of players have levelled out over the past 2-3 years the total numbers remain fairly solid.

The opportunities to grow are really in three areas which are 1) more publicity and awareness around junior football opportunities on a specific local basis, 2) significantly more thought given to increasing girls participation in the sport and 3) ensuring that the less-skilled are made to feel welcome at every level.

It seems that the best opportunity to improve the participation numbers is to sort out the relationship between schools and clubs on a case-by-case basis.

The retention issue is more critical, both within the junior ranks but more specifically between junior and youth or club football. A common theme that was raised was in relation to retaining less-skilled players. The system appears to operate on the basis that at several levels there is a desire to only take the most skilled players forward. This is one of the criticisms of SAP and also a factor of the capacity of senior clubs to take players.

In some cases the children are concerned that they can't play club because they are not good enough and this leads to further confusion around the structure and the associated pathways. There needs to be more work on educating the average parent/coach about the opportunities for children to continue in the sport.

There is only one secret to enhancing participation and that is to create better links between junior and senior clubs/teams and also create competitions that are suitable for the less talented or less committed to participate. This could include more social leagues at youth level which involve families.

One area which requires review is the costs associated with ground usage in the Hobart City Council municipality. Junior football uses a large number of facilities and there must be the opportunity to negotiate a collective arrangement to reduce the overall costs.

Actions include:

1. Arrange a workshop with Eastern Region to discuss restructuring competitions to improve the opportunities for girls.
2. Meet with Devonport Junior Soccer and Devonport Strikers to discuss expansion in their area with a view to understanding the feasibility of establishing a new senior/junior club at Latrobe.
3. Conduct an internal FFT review of communications opportunities for specific, targeted, direct promotion of junior football across Tasmania.

## *The costs of participation for juniors;*

On the whole, cost is not a barrier to participation. Of course, there are specific individual cases but for the vast majority of children and their parents football remains inexpensive and widely accessible. Tasmania junior football costs also compare well with other states of Australia, particularly those of a similar size with similar playing numbers.

As one association highlighted, “the most positive thing about junior football is the price. Other sports on the north-west coast have had to drop their registration fees to match soccer”.

The junior associations all have positive cash positions and are funding a number of initiatives which assist in keeping registration fees low. Schools and junior clubs also operate on the basis of ensuring that as many children as possible can afford the sport.

Football Federation Tasmania has also played its part by keeping registration costs at a consistent level over the past several years which has allowed associations to follow suit. At no point during any discussions was cost seen as a barrier to participation.

Actions include:

1. FFT will continue to monitor the costs of junior participation across the State to ensure the sport remains accessible to players at all levels.

## *Development of available infrastructure for junior football;*

The infrastructure debate is perhaps the most interesting of the entire review given its prominence in advance of this project.

It is clear that access to pitches is not a concern on the north-west coast, in Launceston and for both the Northern Suburbs and Eastern Region associations in Hobart. Their interests are more around improvements, particularly in relation to lights, and also achieving better relationships and outcomes with local councils, as well as reducing rental costs.

Associations were asked about the quality of surfaces and the relationship between that and match cancellations. It was discovered that the quality of the surface was not particularly a factor when a council decided to close its playing fields. Councils are now erring on the side of caution and when the weather is poor they are closing all of their grounds en-masse.

There are many cases where a council will close grounds that cope very well in wet weather simply because the communication message is easier when saying that all grounds under their jurisdiction are closed rather than having to inspect them individually and list their availability one-by-one. To some extent there is also an efficiency for associations in saying that games are either on or off across all of their grades.

In terms of grounds being available the discussion shifts squarely to Central Region who are at or very near capacity in regard to available playing surfaces. Firstly, this has been brought about by their wish to play games only within their own region and under the management of their clubs/teams.

There is a very strong desire to get more access to pitches as evidenced by their approaches to the highest levels of the Tasmanian Government, but again the search is exclusively within their own area.

As mentioned previously, both Eastern Region and Northern Suburbs have plenty of additional capacity but it is not convenient in a location sense. It seems that the only solution is to attempt to identify more spaces through the Hobart City Council and to work directly with those schools whose grounds are not being fully utilised. All the while it is important to remember that the logistics of establishing football pitches are difficult if they are not someone's home ground. Playing on random neutral grounds has not served the sport well at junior level.

An area where the associations believe that Football Federation Tasmania can assist is in negotiations with the local councils both for improvements and rental costs. Those associations who use multiple grounds within a single council area have not in the past attempted to do an all-of-sport ground rental deal with a view to reducing costs. This approach could also include senior club use of similar facilities.

Actions include:

1. FFT Board to maintain an all-of-game perspective with respect to facilities for football in Tasmania.
2. FFT Board to maintain establishment of all-weather junior precinct facilities at Cambridge as a priority.
3. Identify opportunities for ground-sharing in Hobart and meet with the Hobart City Council to explore the options around a whole-of-sport agreement for ground access.

### *...and any other matter that they think fit;*

The hottest topic under “any other business” was the debate between SAP Festivals and Junior Carnivals. This was also drawn across regional lines with the consensus in the south being that carnivals had outlived their usefulness, while across the north they were seen as a driver for continued participation in the sport.

Whilst there was agreement from key individuals in the north that the SAP programs are definitely a positive there is still a desire to return to the larger carnivals; however this depends on ensuring that the Hobart teams participate.

Launceston, Devonport and Burnie still host junior carnivals but attendance for Hobart is by invitation and the teams are representing their clubs rather than the associations.

When the entire subject is distilled down, it basically focusses on the fact that the northern associations and their players really enjoyed the Hobart Carnival and would like to see it return. In the past this event was managed by FFT and fell by the way with the introduction of SAP.

Central Region has indicated that they might be willing to re-establish the Hobart Carnival but there is still much reservation given that it has seen a competitive approach taken to junior football. It might be useful to re-build this slowly and start with limited age groups and rules that encourage participation which is the basis of the SAP Festivals.

It was felt that regional carnivals are adversarial, competitive and wholly anti-development. If they were to continue it was suggested that they be played in a round-robin format without finals so there are no winners.

Even the critics of the loss of the carnivals concede that the SAP program is good, but still feel the regional competitions didn't have to go.

The second subject under this heading is the transition from junior to youth football. This is where money becomes an issue as there is a view that the cost for this step can be three times the amount that juniors currently pay to play. This is seen by some as a serious barrier to retention.

One option that has been discussed is to raise the age groups within the junior associations and keep children playing for longer in these environments. This would potentially reduce some of the drop-off as has occurred in Launceston.

A lot of children are playing multiple sports and this creates the opportunity where a single sport like Aussie Rules can grab the players as they get older. To some extent there is a feeling that football is developing skills and teamwork at a young age purely for the benefit of AFL. If they are staying in junior football for a slightly longer period then the potential to lose them to other sports is also reduced.

The other common theme was in regard to less-skilled players. As noted, the system appears to operate on the basis that at several levels there is a desire to only take the most skilled players forward. This is one of the criticisms of SAP and also a factor of the capacity of senior clubs to take players.

In some cases the children are concerned that they can't play club because they are not good enough and this leads to further confusion around the structure and the associated pathways.

Actions include:

1. Meet with selected Championship Clubs in Hobart who do not have a SAP program to discuss the best way to present opportunities for their talented players to develop in the sport.
2. Meet with southern associations to discuss the possibility of re-instituting the Hobart Carnival.

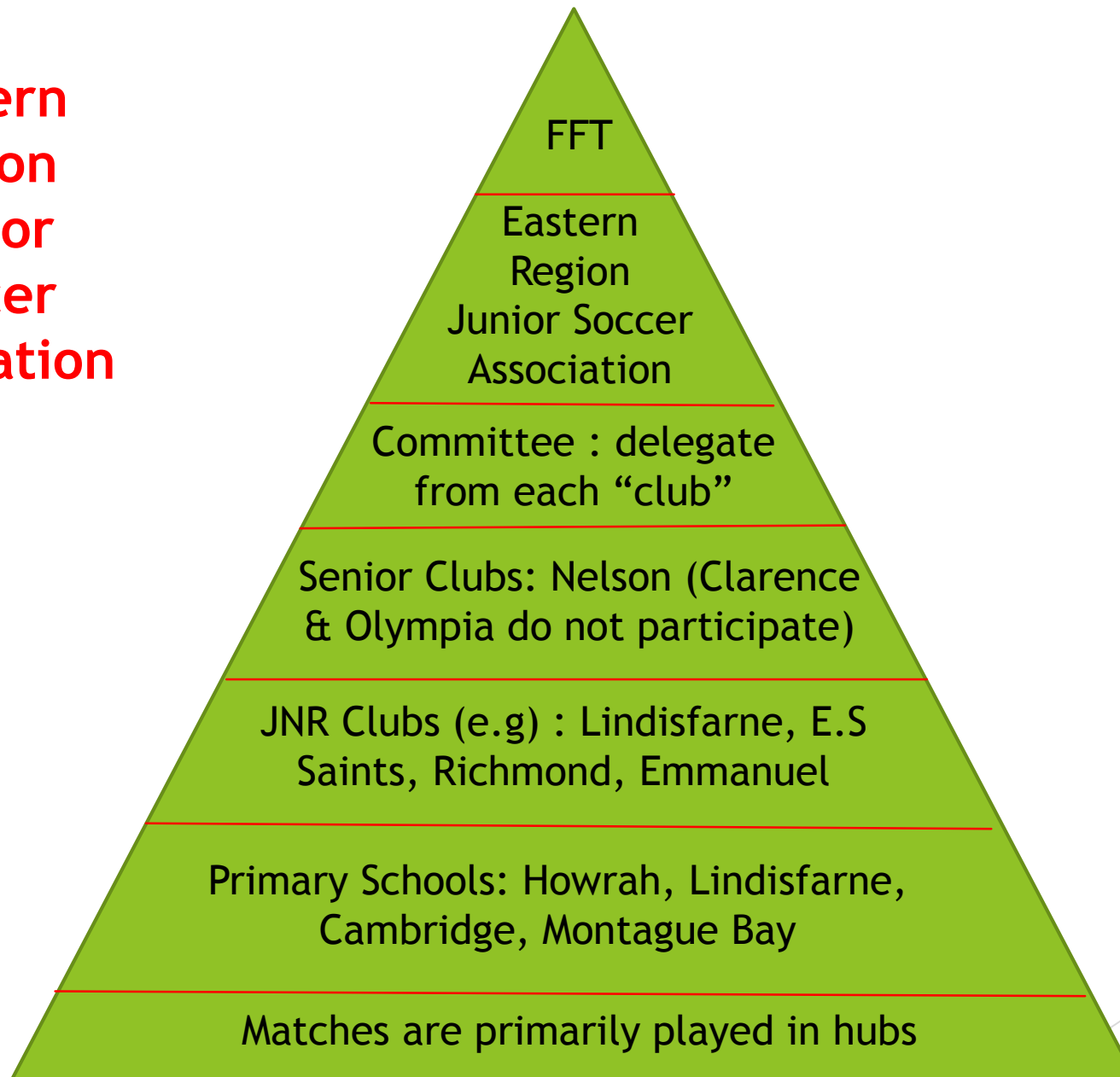
# JUNIOR REVIEW

Appendix A

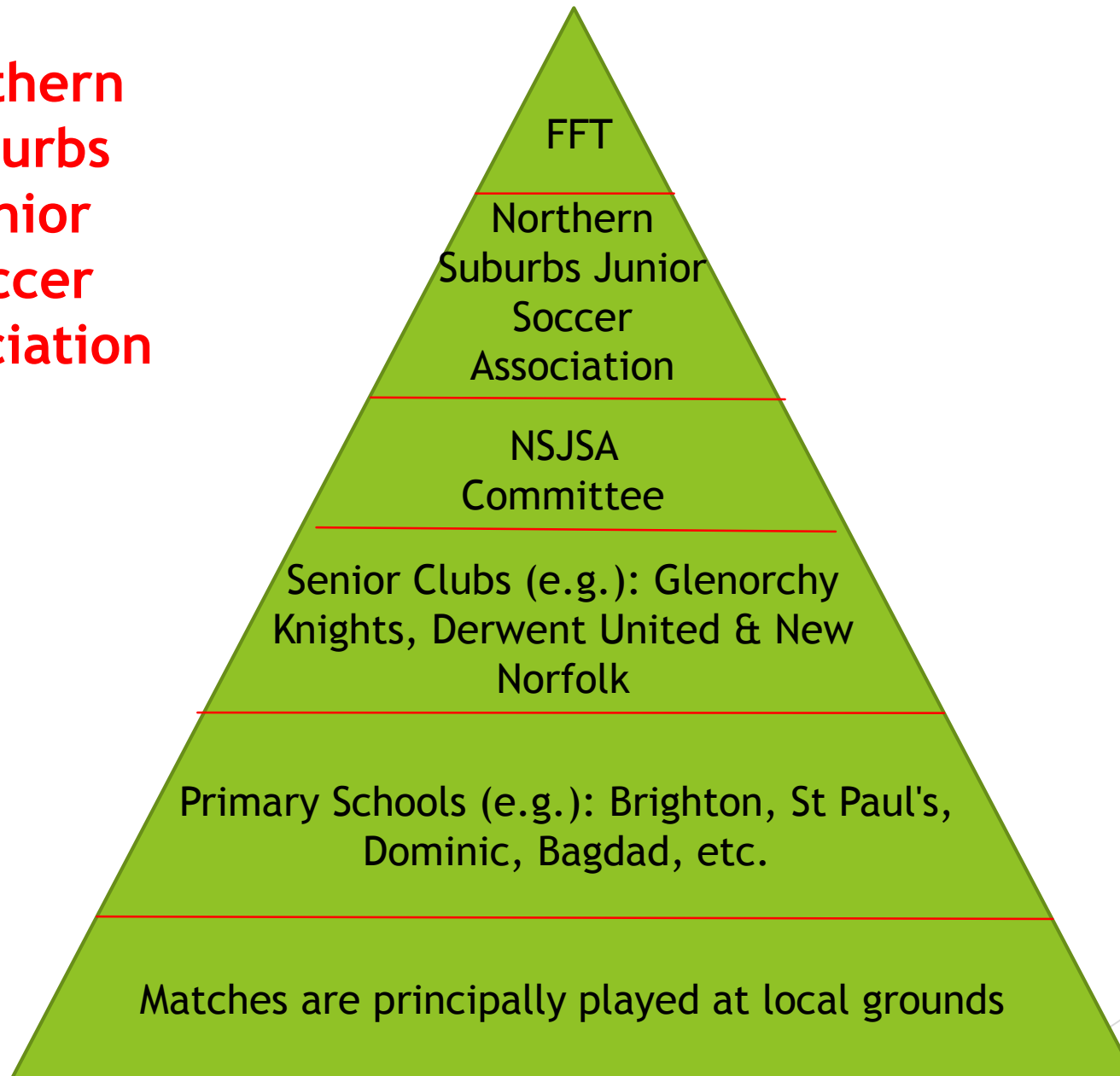
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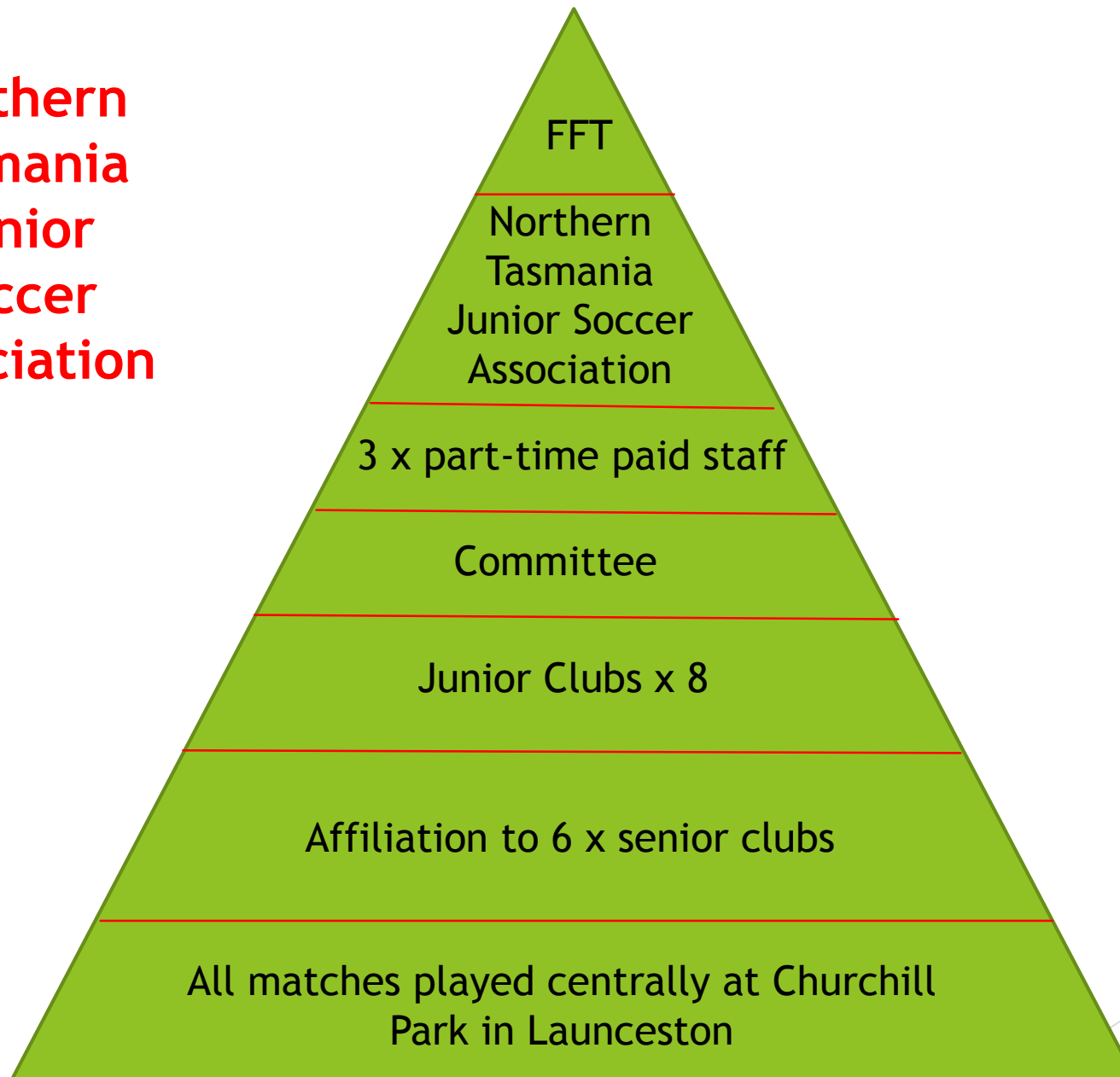
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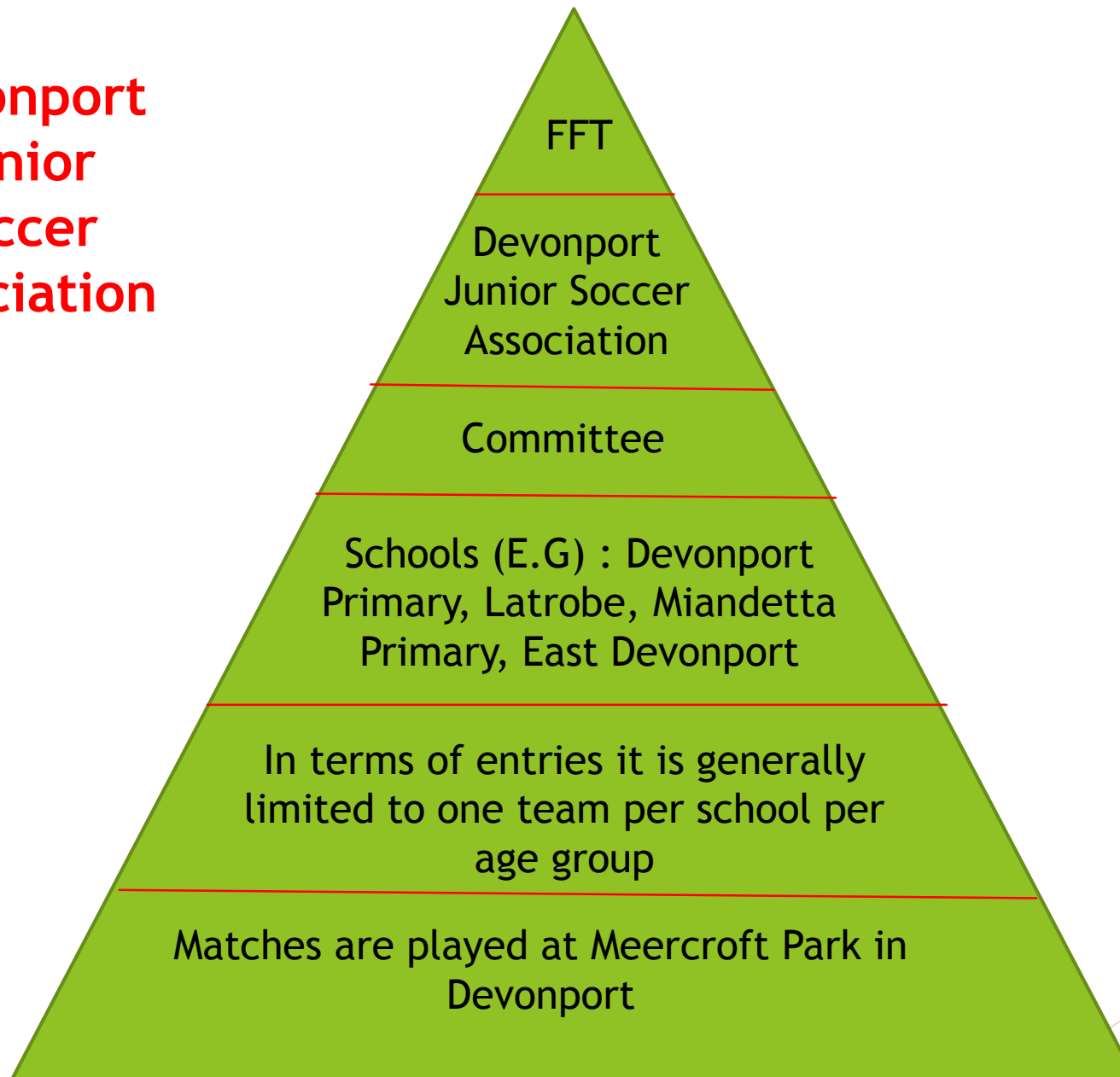
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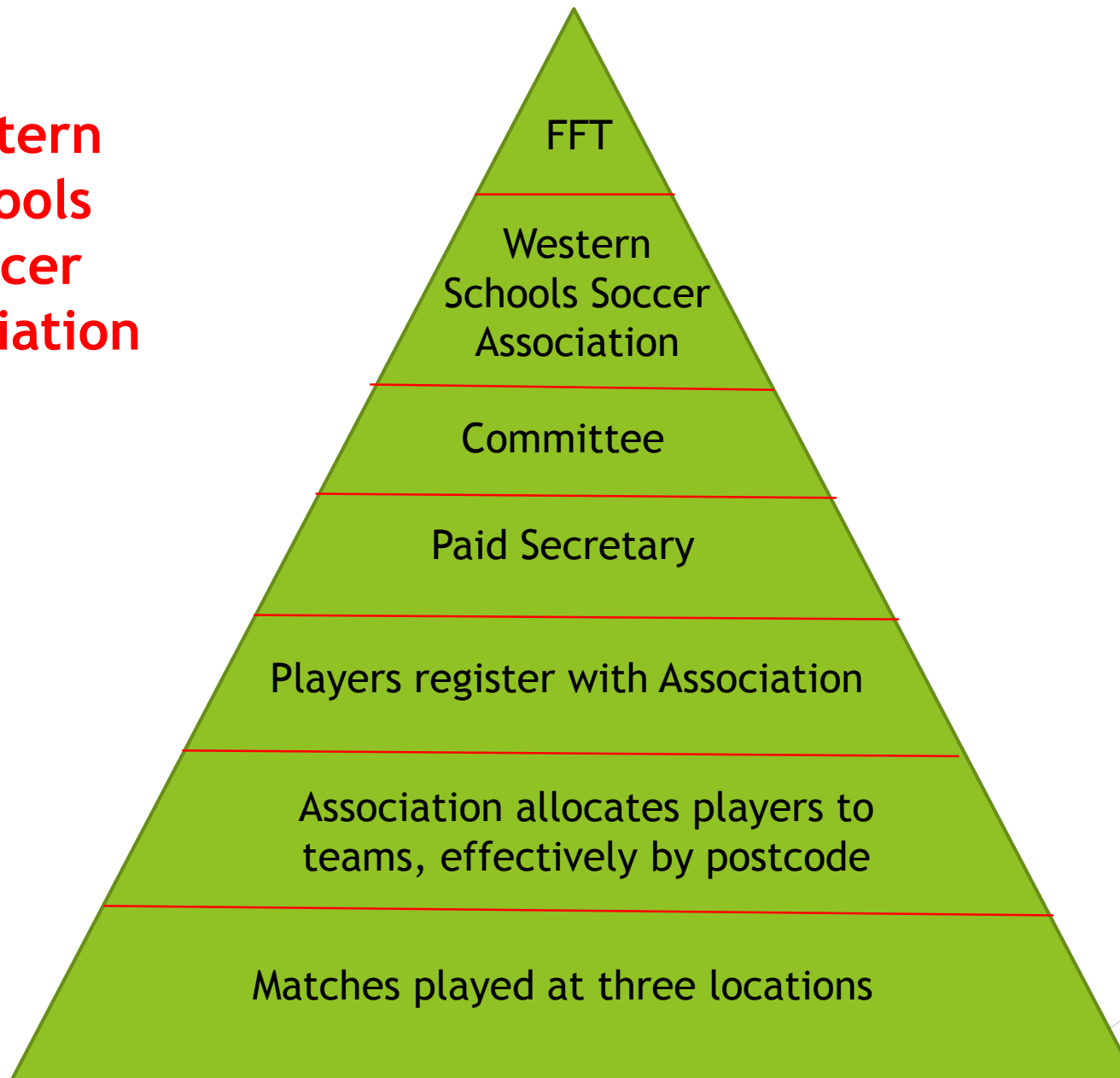
**Northern  
Tasmania  
Junior  
Soccer  
Association**



**Devonport  
Junior  
Soccer  
Association**



**Western  
Schools  
Soccer  
Association**





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