



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



Football Australia recognises, respects and celebrates the cultural distinctions of First Nations Australians and values their rich and positive contribution not only to football, but also to the broader Australian and global societies. In the spirit of reconciliation, Football Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of Australia and that this sovereignty was never ceded. We extend this respect and honour to acknowledge all Elders past and present, and to their future generations as we continue to grow with their guidance and wisdom.

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CHAIR'S REPORT

Chris Nikou

In my final Chair Report for Football Australia, I am filled with gratitude and a great sense of pride. Over the past year, the beautiful game of football has surpassed our greatest expectations and showcased its power to inspire, connect and celebrate the diverse social fabric of Australia.

I begin by acknowledging the unparalleled success of our National Teams in the past year. The Subway Socceroos' remarkable 11th-place finish at the FIFA World Cup 2022™ and the CommBank Matildas' brilliant Semi-Final finish at the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ are testimonies to the hard work, dedication and passion exhibited by Coaches Graham Arnold and Tony Gustavsson, their teams, support staff and every individual who wore our colours.

These performances – the best we have ever seen from both our teams on the world stage – have left an indelible mark on the heart of our nation. Participation rates have surged as young players nationwide find new heroes to emulate.

“TO HOST THE FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 2023™, A PINNACLE EVENT IN WOMEN'S SPORT, WAS NOT ONLY AN HONOUR, BUT ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THE WORLD THE VIBRANT FOOTBALL CULTURE IN AUSTRALIA.”

The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ concluded spectacularly, with Spain emerging as champions after a nail-biting final against England. The event, touted as the most groundbreaking edition yet, witnessed record-breaking attendances of almost two million, with over 75,000 spectators present at the final. FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, praised the transformative nature of the tournament, which generated US\$570 million in revenue – unprecedented in FIFA Women's World Cup™ history. Australia's own CommBank Matildas captured national attention, boasting an average viewership of 3.44 million per match.





The FIFA Women's World Cup™ offered an unparalleled platform to highlight our sport's prominence. Notable figures, from Prime Minister Albanese to federal and state ministers, industry leaders, and major media outlets and platforms, all underscored the immense popularity and influence of football in Australia.

The enthusiasm and dedication shown by every stakeholder made this FIFA Women's World Cup™ the best ever tournament, surpassing all KPIs and leaving an enduring legacy. During the tournament, we received overwhelming praise from stakeholders around the world, who highlighted that new benchmarks had been set. For this, we should take pride as a collective.

Participation rates continued to soar in 2022; we saw an increase around the country of 8% and climbing to 1,528,395 participants. As we finalise the 2023 National Participation Report, we are confident we will see a much greater increase on the back of the successful FIFA World Cup™ participation of our Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas.

Following the remarkable success of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ and the outstanding performances of the CommBank Matildas, we lauded the Federal Government's \$200 million Play Our Way initiative. This program aims to enhance sporting facilities and equipment tailored for women, addressing the remarkable surge in female community sports participation. The program aligns with Football Australia's *Legacy '23* vision, to achieve gender equality in grassroots participation.

During the year, our Australian coaches continued to prosper in overseas leagues, including Ange Postecoglou being appointed Head Coach at Tottenham Hotspur. We also celebrate Kevin Muscat (Yokohama F. Marinos, J.League, Japan); Paddy Kisnorbo (ES Troyes AC, France); Harry Kewell (Assistant Manager, Celtic FC, Scotland); Joe Montemurro (Manager, Juventus Women, Italy); David Zdrilic (Assistant Coach, Genoa FC, Italy); Michael Valkanis (Head Coach, Hapoel Tel Aviv, Israel); John Hutchinson (Manager, El Paso Locomotive MLS USA); Tanya Oxtoby (Assistant Coach, Chelsea Women, UK); Belinda Wilson (Senior Technical Development Manager, FIFA) and Alen Stajcic (Manager, Philippines Women until recently); for their prominent managerial

roles worldwide, contributing to Australia's growing influence and impact on global football.

Borrowing from the words of last year's Annual Report, I again commend our Member Federations, A-League Clubs, PFAs and the Women's Football Council, as well as Associations, Zones, Community Clubs and our large volunteer base.

“THEIR RESILIENCE AND COMMITMENT, ESPECIALLY DURING SUCH TRYING TIMES, IS THE BACKBONE OF OUR FOOTBALL COMMUNITY.”

I would also like to extend my deep gratitude to all Members for the support they provided during my time as Chair.

In the 2023 Australia Day Honours, Football Australia celebrated five esteemed Members from our football family. Susan Crow (AM) and His Honour Judge Rauf Soulio (AM) were both awarded the distinguished Member of the Order of Australia. Susan's recognition comes from her invaluable contribution to sports administration, including her role as Head of Community at Melbourne City FC and as a member of Football Australia's Women's Football Council. His Honour Judge Soulio's accolades stem from his tenure as President of Football South Australia, Deputy Chairperson of the Asian Football Confederation's Entry Control Body, and significant contributions to multicultural affairs, the judiciary and the community. Additionally, Andrew Kendall OAM and Owen Pezet OAM, both from Queensland, and David Swan OAM from New South Wales received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

In the recent King's Birthday Honours List, Football Australia celebrated the recognition of four esteemed Members of the Australian football community. Moya Dodd AO, former CommBank Matildas vice-captain and a significant advocate for gender equality, was honoured as an Officer of Australia (AO) for her services to football, women's equality and law. Maria Berry AM, a stalwart in women's football and former Chair of Football



Victoria's Women's Standing Committee, was awarded a (AM) for her contributions to football, women in sport, and to business generally. Posthumously awarded was former Socceroo Alan Garside OAM, recognised with an (OAM) for his service to football. Also honoured was Narelda Jacobs OAM, a member of Football Australia's National Indigenous Advisory Group, recognised for her services to the media and First Nations equality advocacy.

On behalf of the football community, I congratulate each recipient, and share the pride in their significant contributions to – and impacts on – football and broader Australian society.

Reflecting on my journey as a part of the Football Australia Board since October 2014 and as Chair since November 2018, it has been a period of monumental growth and transformation for the sport. Together, with the collaboration of all our stakeholders, we have championed causes such as equal pay, unbundling the professional leagues and becoming aligned with global standards. With the commercial resurgence and the initiation of the *Legacy '23* plan, I'm proud to say Australian football stands tall both domestically and on the international stage.

As I transition out, I am confident in the Board's capabilities to lead Australian football to greater heights, and I am particularly grateful to my fellow Directors for their unwavering dedication and wisdom.

Our CEO, James Johnson, and his team have continued to be a beacon of progress and I am delighted with the ongoing strengthening of our commercial prospects and government relations.

“PROJECTS SUCH AS THE HOME OF THE MATILDAS IN VICTORIA, THE WESTERN AUSTRALIA SAM KERR FOOTBALL CENTRE, AND THE STATE CENTRE OF FOOTBALL IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, EXEMPLIFY THE GROWTH AND INVESTMENT IN THE SPORT.”

Importantly, funding at community and grassroots levels continued throughout the year around Australia, and this focus and commitment towards unlocking more funding for our community must persist as our participation rates continue to soar, placing our 2,400+ clubs around the country under strain. It's important to note that through the *Legacy '23* plan, all states benefited from unprecedented levels of funding, whether it was for vital community and grassroots facilities, elite high-performance facilities, community programs or rectangular stadium upgrades. With more than \$389 million unlocked by football-related legacy programs, we applaud the role of government and commercial partners since the inception of *Legacy '23* in 2021.

During the year, we also announced the retirement of decorated referee Chris Beath. In his illustrious career spanning over 15 years, Chris Beath firmly established himself as one of Australia's premier football referees. The 38-year-old Queenslander, who made his A-League refereeing debut in 2008, culminated his journey with his 234th A-League match at the A-League Grand Final 2023. Beath's record boasts officiating at major international tournaments, including the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cups, FIFA U17 World Cup™, Tokyo Olympics, and the FIFA Club World Cup™.

“WE CONGRATULATE CHRIS FOR HIS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT, PROFESSIONALISM AND CONTRIBUTION TO BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL.”

Chris's retirement came into effect in his final international role at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, and he has created a legacy that will inspire generations of referees to come.

Football Australia deeply mourned the loss of two stalwarts of Australian football: Manfred Schaefer and Rale Rasic OAM. Schaefer, a 1974 FIFA World Cup™ representative and Hall of Fame member, had an illustrious career as a player, earning 73

caps for Australia and leaving an indelible mark on the game. Also recognised in the Football Australia Hall of Fame, Rasic journeyed from being a Yugoslavian orphan to becoming one of the youngest FIFA World Cup™ coaches. His contributions as both a player and coach have left an indelible legacy in Australian football. Both were pivotal figures in shaping the landscape of Australian football and their legacies will be celebrated for generations to come. On behalf of the football community, Football Australia extends its heartfelt condolences to the Schaefer and Rasic families.

I was honoured to be re-elected in February to the AFC Executive Committee for another term. This took place at the 33rd AFC Congress in Bahrain. Since joining the AFC in 2006, Australia has actively collaborated with fellow Member Associations. I am grateful to my colleagues in Asia for their trust and look forward to advancing Asian football collectively.

It has been an honour to serve Australian football. The game has blossomed and the foundations we have built promise an exciting future. As we anticipate the 2024 Paris Olympics and the subsequent FIFA World Cup™ cycles, it is imperative we embrace fresh perspectives and energies, and I believe my departure facilitates that.

In conclusion, as I pass the baton, I am confident the future of Football Australia is prosperous and bright. With aligned stakeholders, the passion of millions, and a game that resonates with so many, the sky is the limit.

Thank you all for this incredible journey.



CHRIS NIKOU
CHAIR

CEO'S REPORT

James Johnson

In 2023, Australia welcomed the world as Football Australia hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. From 20 July to 20 August, Australia hosted 32 of the world's best women's national football teams, with Spain eventually crowned World Champions.

The CommBank Matildas created history as the team recorded its best performance at a FIFA Women's World Cup™, reaching the Semi-Finals against England. The CommBank Matildas' performance also represented the best performance by any Australian senior National Team at a FIFA tournament, forever writing the CommBank Matildas into the annals of Australian football folklore, alongside the likes of the '74, '06 and '22 Subway Socceroos.

Australia has a long and successful history of hosting global sporting events, and the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ further enhanced Australia's reputation as an ideal candidate to host future global football tournaments.

"THE TOURNAMENT ITSELF WELCOMED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE TO AUSTRALIA AND PROVIDED A TIMELY BOOST TO THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY AS AUSTRALIA CONTINUES TO RESPOND SUCCESSFULLY TO THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC."

When building a vision for the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, we believed that not only could Australia be a great host of global international tournaments, we also wanted to prove that people would visit to watch matches and stadiums would be full, or tune in from the largest broadcast markets throughout Asia, Europe and the United Kingdom.

Following the conclusion of the tournament, the FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, hailed it as the best edition of any FIFA Women's World Cup™ ever, surpassing all targets, with nearly two million people attending matches (compared with 1.1 million in 2019). Australia hosted a total of 35 matches, attracting 1,269,531 spectators at an average of 36,272 per match, confirming Australia as a strong host of global football competitions.



The CommBank Matildas have done the nation proud. Australia's seven matches during the tournament attracted 403,136 fans with an average of 57,591 attending each match, accounting for 99.92% of capacity at each venue. Their journey through the tournament captivated the nation, with matches rating an average audience of 3.44 million per match. The aggregate viewership for their Network 7 fixtures stood at a staggering 24.08 million. Optus Sport, the tournament's host broadcaster, saw social media views of FIFA Women's World Cup™ content exceeding 75 million. Average viewing time of content by each Optus Sport subscriber was over 21 hours and page views of content articles reached 5.5 million during a five-week period.

“WITH A PROJECTED GLOBAL REACH OF TWO BILLION PEOPLE, THE TOURNAMENT SUCCESSFULLY DEBUNKED THE MYTH THAT AUSTRALIA PRESENTS A DIFFICULT TIME ZONE FOR GLOBAL VIEWING MARKETS, WITH MATCHES BROADCAST IN VIEWER-FRIENDLY TIMESLOTS IN THE WORLD'S LARGEST MARKETS, INCLUDING CHINA, INDIA, THE UK AND THE EAST COAST OF THE USA.”

The year 2023 marked a turning point for Australian football as the most important in the sport's 100-year history, with the year highlighted by the Subway Socceroos' participation at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, as well as Football Australia's co-hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. Our participation in Qatar was the Subway Socceroos' fifth consecutive appearance in a FIFA World Cup™, and although the team lost to eventual champions, Argentina, in a mouthwatering Round of 16 match, victories against Denmark and Tunisia in the group stages meant the Subway Socceroos recorded their highest ever finish at a FIFA World Cup™.

This new administration has led an aggressive agenda of change and transformation for Australian football. In 2020, we recognised that our upcoming participation at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and our co-hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, presented Football Australia with an excellent opportunity to build two iconic National Team brands and connect them to the largest participation sport community in the country, to drive the growth of the game.

At the time, however, Australian football faced major challenges: the sport was divided, sponsors were leaving, and our National Teams lacked visibility. We recognised the need for a new vision and developed the XI Principles for the future of Australian football, a 15-year vision that would guide the transformation of the sport and begin the implementation of our plans to leverage these two FIFA World Cup™ tournaments, to propel Australian football into a new future.

Today, Football Australia is a drastically different organisation to the one this administration inherited, and we are delighted to report that the organisation saw a net surplus of \$3.6 million and a net Members' equity of \$21.9 million in the financial year 2023, and following 24 months of strong financial performance, Football Australia is now in the healthiest financial position it has ever been.

This financial success is largely due to the popularity and success of National Teams, the Subway Socceroos and the CommBank Matildas. We are proud to have two of the most recognisable national sporting teams in Australia that inspire millions of people in Australia and around the world. Both teams have been able to successfully blend youth and experience to achieve world-class results, while also nurturing the next generation of National Team players. The results of both programs speak to the success and the health of our National Teams.

It was a stand-out year for the likes of Harry Souttar, who, after suffering a serious knee injury, returned to the Subway Socceroos squad to play a starring role at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, earning a mid-season transfer to former Premier League champions Leicester City Football Club. We have also seen Riley McGree establish himself as an important member of Championship outfit

Middlesborough with key goals and assists this year after joining the club in 2022.

Our female players continue to play at some of the world's biggest clubs, including Arsenal, Manchester City, Chelsea, Real Madrid, and Lyon. Sam Kerr, Caitlyn Foord and Steph Catley continue to rank among the best players in the world, while Mary Fowler and Kyra Cooney-Cross have quickly established themselves as prodigious talents, following breakthrough performances at the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. This year was a stellar year for CommBank Matildas Captain Sam Kerr, and it would be remiss not to mention her historic achievement of placing second in the Ballon d'Or (Hayley Raso placed 17th) and also being crowned AFC's Women's Player of the Year.

Australian coaches are also excelling on the global stage. After two extremely successful seasons at Celtic Football Club, Ange Postecoglou secured a historic move to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, becoming the first Australian to manage a club in the Premier League. Tanya Oxtoby, who was assistant coach of Chelsea Football Club women's team during one of its most successful periods, became Head Coach of Northern Ireland's women's national team. Kevin Muscat also continues a successful period in Japan with Yokohama F. Marinos, which was crowned Japanese Super Cup winner after winning the J.League the year before.

After 12 months of increased player transfers from the A-Leagues (Men's and Women's) to clubs abroad, Australia is steadily establishing itself as a key producer and exporter of talent and is once again featuring on the global stage. International transfers from the A-League Men increased from 16 in the 2021/22 season to 19 in the 2022/23 season. This included significant moves for rising stars Jordan Bos (Melbourne City to Westerlo, Belgium), Nectarios Triantis (Central Coast Mariners to Sunderland FC, England), and Marco Tilio (Melbourne City to Celtic FC, Scotland). Middlesborough FC recently signed Tom Glover and Samuel Silvera, where they will join fellow Subway Soccerer Riley McGree, and Aiden O'Neill joined Belgian Pro-League side Standard Liege. In a new Australian record for an international transfer, Nestory Irankunda has also signed a deal with football giants FC Bayern Munich.





Domestically, the game has never been in a stronger position. Through our *Legacy '23* plan, which we launched at Parliament House in Canberra, in February 2021, football – and more specifically, women’s football – has unlocked more than \$389 million in federal and state government funding towards *Legacy '23*-related projects as published in our pre-tournament *Legacy '23* report in August 2023. A large portion of these funds has been allocated to projects primarily focused on reshaping the game for the benefit of women and girls.

“THIS INVESTMENT HAS ALREADY MADE AN IMPACT AS WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE 50:50 GENDER PARTICIPATION BY 2027, WITH OVERALL FEMALE PARTICIPATION INCREASING FROM 22% TO 26%.”

Considerable investment into community facilities has also improved the Community Club environment for women and girls, with the number of clubs considered ‘inclusive’ increasing from 36% to 40%.

In a significant moment for Australian women’s sport, the Federal Government also committed a further \$200 million to fund the improvement of sporting facilities and equipment specifically for women, when it announced its groundbreaking initiative, the Play Our Way program. This commitment was in response to the extraordinary success of our co-hosting the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, and the rise in female participation in community sport.

To complement this, together with Commonwealth Bank, we have launched the **Growing Football Fund**, to support the continued growth of women’s football across Australia. The community fund will focus on two primary pillars of coaching and participation, with the goal of attracting and retaining more women and girls in football. To further support the growth and development for women and girls in football, Clubs and Associations can apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 to use towards key initiatives for the 2024 season.

Before the end of the calendar year, Football Australia will publish a final *Legacy '23* report, which will highlight the overall impact of our co-hosting the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. We believe co-hosting such an important women’s football event has contributed to greater visibility and inclusion for women and girls in our sport.

Although football remains the number one participation sport in the country, we continue to work to consolidate this position. Following the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and the coordinated and bespoke marketing campaign with our Member Federations to drive participation in the lead-up to the tournament, we have experienced a 10% increase in our participation numbers. We are anticipating further growth in 2024 thanks to our successful co-hosting of the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

Change is never easy and it is fair to say Australian football has encountered many challenges. Amid these challenges, however, we have experienced numerous successes during the four years this administration has been charged with the responsibility of leading Australian football.

Establishing and then pursuing a clear vision has been crucial to the success of the organisation. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought widespread disruption to everyday activities, and the impact on our game was very damaging.

At Football Australia we recognised that Australian football would need to recover and chart a new course towards a renewed vision for the game: one that would both unite and inspire us. We established the **XI Principles for the future of Australian football** (XI Principles), a 15-year vision for the game, which articulates a new strategic agenda for the future for Australian football and the 11 principles that will guide Football Australia to realising that ambition. Since its inception, the XI Principles have acted as a ‘north star’ for Australian football, proving to be a cornerstone in decision-making, and helping bring certainty to an unpredictable future.

The XI Principles have served as a unifying force, allowing us to rally together and create a ‘calling card that announces to the rest



of the world who we are and what we stand for'. It was this clear vision that significantly contributed to Football Australia winning the right to co-host the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ and to 'shape the competition', so that it became a marker and a reference point for generations to come, rather than just a football tournament.

To ensure Football Australia was able to move the sport towards the future envisioned within the XI Principles, we needed to create the right conditions for success, and ensure the transformation of the organisation into a modern structure that was fit for purpose and able to align with contemporary standards, but more importantly, to allow the sport to flourish.

This journey of transformation commenced immediately in 2020, when we successfully stewarded the most significant governance restructure in the sport's history: the separation of the professional leagues from Football Australia. This separation allowed Football Australia to focus on strengthening community and grassroots football and enhancing the performance and reputations of our iconic National Teams – a focus that is central to our strategy to better connect the football community with those playing at a national level.

The growth in participation numbers over the last three years is a testament to the way Football Australia has been able to execute this strategy, despite the damaging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlights the passion the Australian public has for the sport, and the impact that our iconic CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos have on the Australian psyche.

Our intention to create a thriving domestic football ecosystem was recently recognised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) at its annual awards ceremony, where AFC President, the Honourable Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, awarded Football Australia the prestigious 2023 AFC President's Recognition Award for Grassroots Football, for our work in this space. The award highlighted our partnership with Football Australia's stakeholders – Member Federations, Associations, Community Clubs, participants, administrators, referees, and volunteers – all of whom have played a crucial role in us receiving this recognition. This recognition arrived on the heels of Australia's role as co-host

of the groundbreaking FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ – a pivotal sporting moment for Australia – and recognises many of the programs we collaborate on with our stakeholders at the community football level.

At an elite and professional level, we are beginning to see the results of the waves of regulatory changes we introduced to the domestic professional football landscape in 2021 and 2022. In January this year, FIFA reported that spending by professional clubs on international transfer fees in 2022 reached US\$6.5 billion, an increase of 33.5% compared with 2021. Domestically, we experienced exponential growth in the international transfers between Australian and overseas clubs this year, with the total value of transfer receipts (across two transfer windows) totalling \$16 million, compared with \$3.86 million across the same period in 2022. These strong performances in the global transfer market have been made possible through the implementation of key regulatory changes enacted over the past two years to establish a domestic transfer system, and we believe there is further growth to take place.

“THE VISIBILITY OF OUR NATIONAL TEAMS – THE COMMBANK MATILDAS AND SUBWAY SOCCEROOS – AND INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC TO SEE THEM PLAY MORE OFTEN, IN MORE PLACES ACROSS AUSTRALIA, HAS BEEN ANOTHER CRITICAL DRIVER FOR THE ORGANISATION.”

This led to Football Australia revamping its broadcast strategy in 2020, which saw us acquire the rights to AFC national team competitions, which we then bundled together with our other National Teams rights. Football Australia then worked with its broadcast partner, Paramount ANZ, to shift our focus to free-to-air TV. As a result, all our National Team matches are now played on free-to-air TV, reaching a broader audience, enabling us to commercialise our brands. This has helped increase visibility and engagement with the sport.

Football Australia has made it its mission to play National Team matches and national-level competitions in every state and territory in Australia. This year, we were able to take the Australia Cup Playoffs to Darwin – days before the commencement of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ – to ensure the Northern Territory was also able to experience the halo effect of the tournament. The Australia Cup is the nation's only truly national knock-out competition, with more clubs than ever participating in this year's edition – 775 – which saw Sydney FC crowned Winners for the second time in the club's history.

In October, Football Australia hosted Group A of the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024 Asian Qualifiers Round 2 (Asian Qualifiers). In addition to being the first matches in Australia, following the FIFA Women's World Cup™, the CommBank Matildas had also not played in Perth since 2018, so these matches were met with great anticipation and excitement. All matches sold out, so we decided to move the second match against Philippines from the 20,500 capacity HBF Park to Optus Stadium, which also went on to sell out, with nearly 60,000 people attending the match to watch local hero Sam Kerr score a hat-trick as the CommBank Matildas ran out eventual winners 8–0. The CommBank Matildas would go on to win all three matches in front of sold-out stadiums, with nearly 100,000 people attending the matches. This also marked 11 consecutive CommBank Matildas matches to have sold out, proving that the popularity of the Matildas was not just a FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ phenomenon.

Leading such change over the last three years has required a great deal of conviction, however, the achievements of the last four years speak to the way this administration has laid the foundation for implementing change. There have been moments along this journey where we have come under significant pressure for the decisions we have made, but the results and achievements of this administration have demonstrated that we have been able to elevate the sport to new heights.

Today, the CommBank Matildas are the most valuable sporting team in the country and a new generation of Subway Socceroos continues to inspire the nation as one of Australia's most-loved national sporting teams. We can now say definitively that football





is the only sport in Australia with two iconic national teams – a key target outlined in our XI Principles.

The next cycle for Australian football, however, is shaping up to be one of the most exciting and eventful for the sport.

Recently, Football Australia and Professional Footballers Australia agreed a landmark and industry-leading National Teams Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The new CBA represents a sophisticated economic model that rewards our players in tandem with the growth and commercial success of our National Teams – making them key contributors in our game’s prosperity. This CBA is a landmark not just for Football Australia, but also for sports organisations worldwide. It sets a new standard for how players and national associations can work together to achieve common objectives.

The CBA is an expression of Football Australia’s intention to be more innovative than it has ever been about unlocking the value that may not have previously been apparent. In the coming months, Football Australia will look ahead as it seeks to secure the future of the sport in a cycle that includes a range of key events, including the FIFA World Cup 2026™; the 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup (which Football Australia is bidding for), and the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2027™.

Also in the coming months, Football Australia will seek to leverage the on-field successes and popularity of both the CommBank Matildas and the Subway Socceroos, to secure a new multimillion-dollar broadcast deal for the sport. In the spirit of continuous innovation, Football Australia has reacquired AFC National Team rights and in a first for any Member Association around the world, Football Australia has successfully secured the broadcast rights to the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2027™, which will take place in a location yet to be decided. Securing the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2027™ allows Football Australia to provide a potential broadcaster with exclusive access to the CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos (except for the men’s FIFA World Cup 2026™) until the expiration of the deal. This is a unique offering and Football Australia is expecting a record-breaking and game-changing broadcast deal for the sport.

Following matches against Lionel Messi’s World Champions Argentina in Beijing and a historic match against England at the iconic Wembley Stadium, the Subway Socceroos will commence their qualifying journey for the FIFA World Cup 2026™, when they take on Bangladesh in Melbourne on 16 November. Also, in January next year, they will also play in the Asian Cup Qatar 2023™. The Subway Olyroos, who qualified for the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Qatar 2024, to be held from 15 April – 3 May 2024, will need to finish in the top three to automatically qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Off the back of co-hosting the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, Football Australia has turned its attention to bringing more global football content to a football-hungry population. Football Australia remains a candidate to host the 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup, and will also continue to contribute to the growth and development of Asian football by bringing other regional football content to our shores. The newly revamped FIFA Club World Cup is another global football competition that Football Australia will explore the possibility of hosting in the future. We have proven that Australia is a strong candidate for hosting global football competitions and we will continue to explore these opportunities.

The year 2023 has been a watershed for Football Australia and the sport more broadly. It has been a year where the sport has been able to differentiate itself from others within the domestic sporting landscape by highlighting its inherent qualities. We have never been in a stronger position to capitalise on the popularity of the sport, and we have already taken steps to take Australian football to new heights in the future.

JAMES JOHNSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



FINANCIAL REPORT



FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023 (FY2023)

The net operating surplus of Football Australia for 2023 is \$671,000, compared with a \$3.7 million deficit in 2022, while the overall net surplus remains at \$671,000 after extraordinary items and discontinued operations, compared with a surplus of \$3.6 million in 2022.

The FY2023 period saw the Subway Socceroos achieve their best performance at a FIFA World Cup™, winning two group stage matches and qualifying for the Round of 16 in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. New sponsorship was also attracted during FY2023, with Subway announced as the naming rights partner for the Socceroos.

The lead-in period to the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ also presented unique opportunities to grow sponsorship revenue for the CommBank Matildas. Federal Government funding also increased as Football Australia continued to pursue its *Legacy '23* strategy, with its focus on preparing the CommBank Matildas for a successful performance and striving for gender equality in grassroots participation.

We highlight the following results for Football Australia:

- Operating surplus before grants and distributions for the year ended 30 June 2023 of \$2.9 million.
- Grants and distributions for the year ended 30 June 2023 totalling \$2.3 million.
- Net surplus after discontinued operations and extraordinary items for the year ended 30 June 2023 is \$671,000.
- Net Members' Equity as at 30 June 2023 is \$22.6 million.

The financial results encapsulate the revenues and expenditures of administering and/or supporting the key pillars of our global game including:

- Ten (10) National Teams (Youth National Teams through to both the men's and women's senior teams – the Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas) competing across all parts of Asia and the world.
- A national cup competition (Australia Cup, formerly FFA Cup).
- Football Development (MiniRoos and other participation programs, player pathways, Coach Education, club development, etc.).



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023 (FY2023)

OPERATING REVENUE

SUMMARISED PROFIT & LOSS (\$'000)	2023	2022
Broadcast	11,377	15,392
Sponsorship	20,177	13,740
Gate Receipts	4,483	6,297
Host Government	6,800	5,825
Grants	18,005	14,901
Prize Money	19,374	–
Registration & Affiliation	11,733	10,830
Merchandising	3,182	1,101
Other	18,139	8,368
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	113,269	76,454

OPERATING EXPENSES

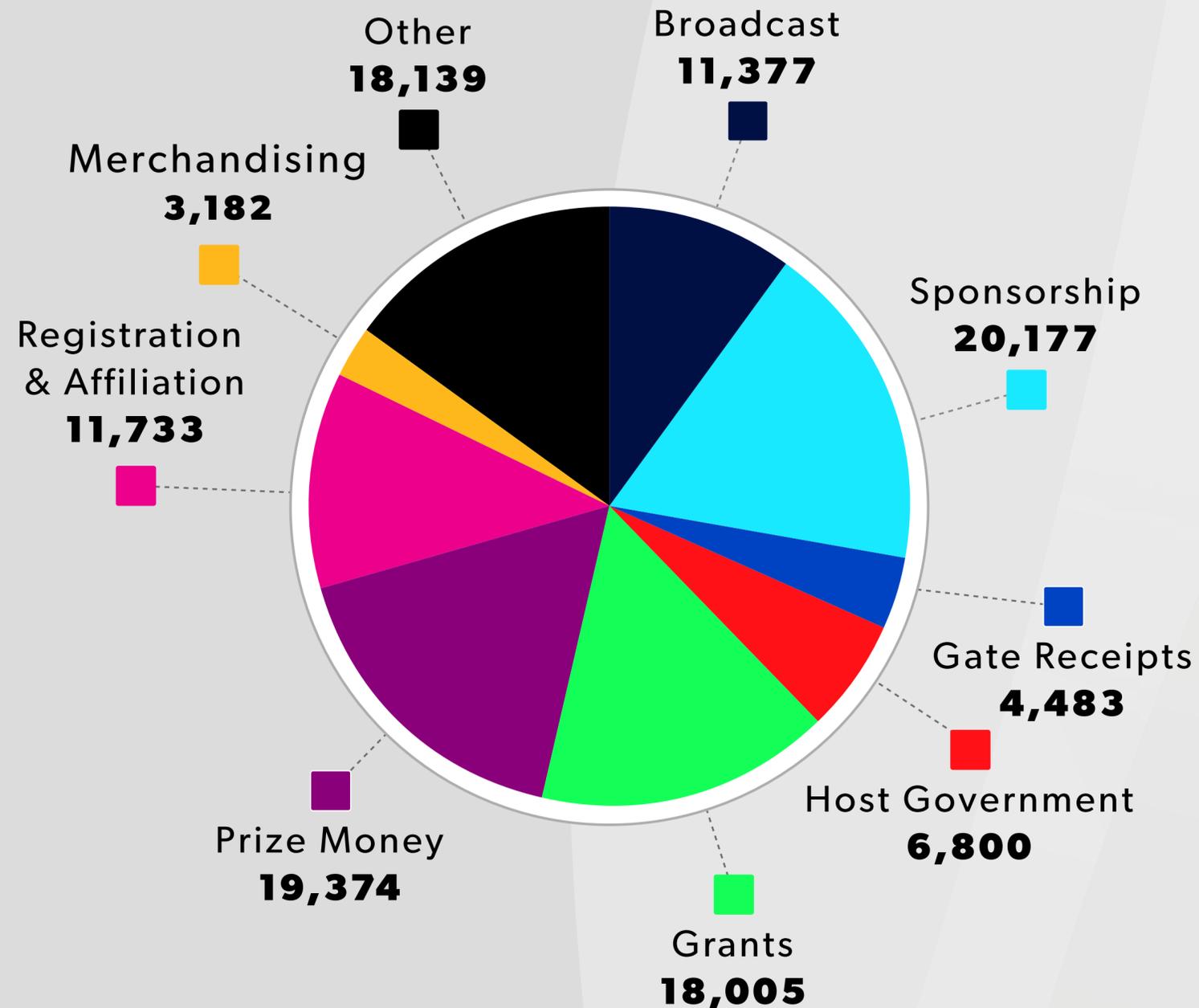
SUMMARISED PROFIT & LOSS (\$'000)	2023	2022
Employee Benefits	47,504	27,330
Travel	15,660	19,241
Marketing & Media	5,398	4,669
Event Hosting	10,302	5,245
Administration	5,013	2,075
Broadcast	4,314	6,529
Other Team Expenses	1,973	2,031
Professional & Consultants	2,035	1,935
Commissions	6,832	5,009
Communication & Technology	9,186	3,481
Other	2,103	1,338
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	110,322	78,882

SUMMARISED PROFIT & LOSS (\$'000)	2023	2022
OPERATING SURPLUS (Before Grants & Distributions)	2,948	(2,428)
Grants & Distributions	2,277	1,277
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) (Before Discontinued Operations)	671	(3,705)
Extraordinary Items	–	7,113
Discontinued Operations	–	221
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	671	3,629
SUMMARISED BALANCE SHEET EXTRACT (\$'000)		
Total Assets	55,936	45,224
Total Liabilities	33,339	27,935
NET ASSETS	22,597	17,288



OPERATING REVENUE

Total revenue of \$113.3 million in FY2023 has increased in comparison with FY2022 (\$76.5 million). Revenue comprises the following key categories:



- Broadcast**
 (\$4 million decrease from FY2022)

This category comprises the domestic and international broadcast rights to Football Australia's competition, the Australia Cup, along with Socceroos, Matildas and other Youth National Team matches. The decrease is attributable to the timing of annual match revenue recognition.

- Sponsorship**
 (\$6.4 million increase from FY2022)

This includes all sponsorship revenue in both cash and value-in-kind. The increase is driven by the continuation of the CommBank Matildas naming rights deal, the new Subway Socceroos naming rights deal and LEGO partner deals.

- Gate Receipts**
 (\$1.8 million decrease from FY2022)

Gate receipts revenue was received across the Subway Socceroos, CommBank Matildas, Australia Cup Final, the Pararoos and ParaMatildas matches. The unfavourable variance is driven by higher gate receipts in FY2022 for the Subway Socceroos in the Round 3 Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

- Host Government**
 (\$975,000 increase from FY2022)

This category includes revenue

received from various state and territory governments to secure the rights to host Socceroos and Matildas matches. This increase is attributable to home matches for the CommBank Matildas in the lead-up to the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ on home soil.

- Grants**
 (\$3.1 million increase from FY2022)

Football Australia receives grants for specific purposes from sources, including various government departments, the Australian Sports Commission, FIFA and the AFC. The increase in FY2023 is primarily driven by subsidies for the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and qualification and preparation subsidies for the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

- Prize Money**
 (\$19.3 million increase from FY2022)

This reflects prize money received from FIFA for the Round of 16 qualification by the Socceroos for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ campaign.

- Registration and Affiliation**
 (\$0.9 million increase from FY2022)

This category includes National Registration Fees (NRF), registration fees for various

courses and competitions (coaching, refereeing accreditation, MiniRoos, Australia Cup). The increase is due to higher revenue from Coach Education, which is continuing to grow following COVID-19 disruptions.

- Merchandising Revenue**
 (\$2.1 million increase from FY2022)

Football Australia centralises the management of the official merchandising programs for National Teams' products. The increase is a result of higher Football Australia merchandise sales in FY2023 due to more Socceroos and Matildas matches being hosted, and includes the sale of merchandise at home matches.

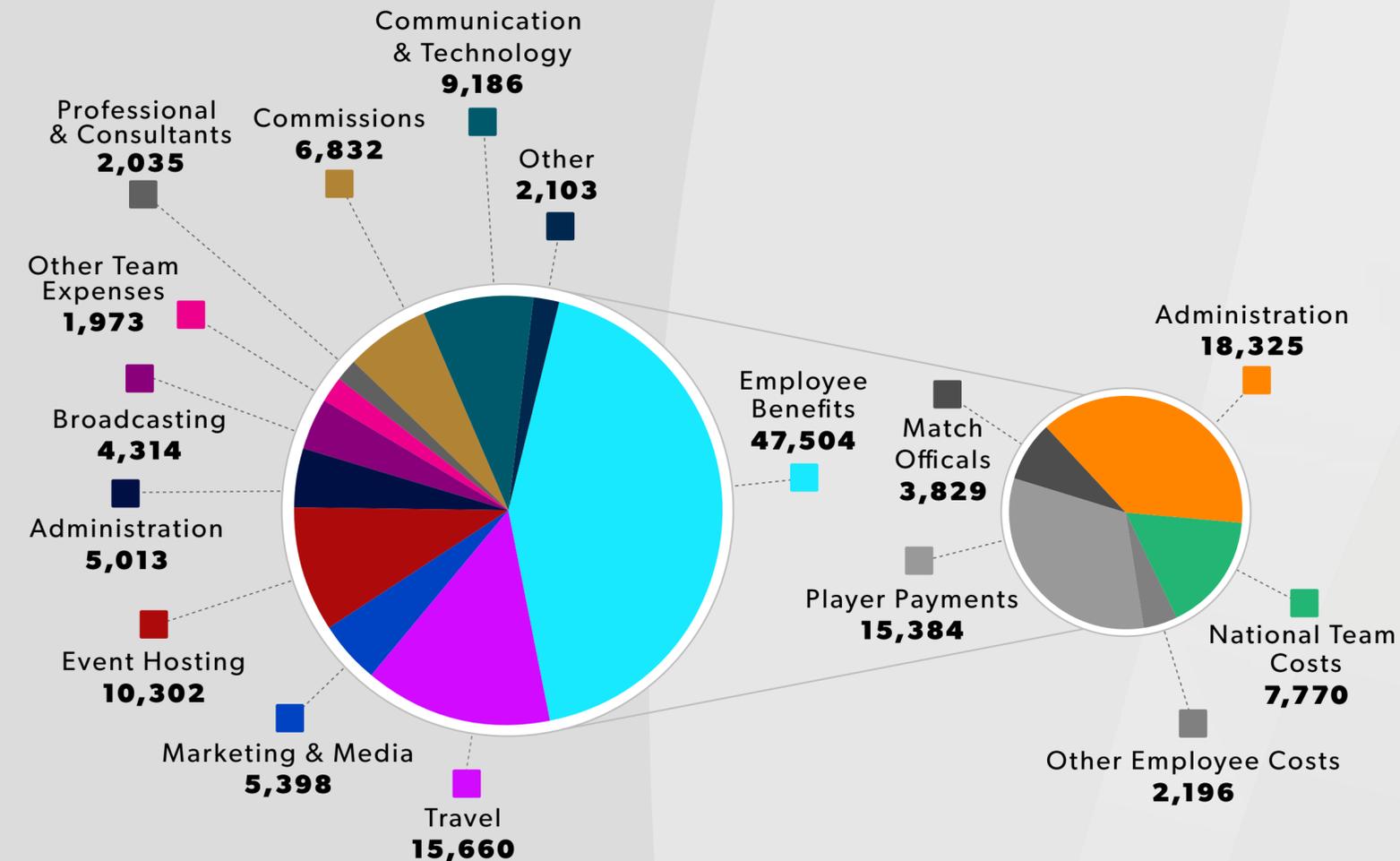
- Other**
 (\$9.8 million increase from FY2022)

All other revenues not captured under specific categories are allocated to Other Revenue. Significant items include domestic product and integrity fees, cost recoveries from APLCO, revenue from Sporting Schools programs and sanction fees for international club matches. The increase is primarily driven by a reclassification of cost recoveries from FY2023 to FY2022 and sanction fees recognised in FY2023.



OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating expenditure of \$110.3 million in FY2023 is a \$31.4-million increase on FY2022 operating expenditure (\$78.9 million). The key elements comprising operating expenditure are as follows:



- Employee and Team Benefit Expenses**
 (\$20.2 million increase from FY2022)

Increase is primarily attributable to payments of player prize money for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, and higher player payments and National Teams support staff costs, including on-costs, and a reclassification of cost recoveries from FY2023 to FY2022.

- Travel Expenses**
 (\$3.6 million decrease from FY2022)

Decreases in costs are due to international travel activity levels and general mobility returning to pre-pandemic levels for National Teams.

- Marketing and Media**
 (\$0.7 million increase from FY2022)

Increase in marketing and advertising costs for the Socceroos and Matildas matches.

- Event Hosting**
 (\$5.1 million increase on FY2022)

This category includes expenses incurred in delivering matches across Socceroos, Matildas, Pararoos and ParaMatildas, and the Australia Cup Final matches. Increases occurred as a result of hosting more senior National Team matches and appearance fees for opposition teams.

- Administration**
 (\$2.9 million increase on FY2022)

This allocation includes corporate overheads, such as office rental, depreciation, utilities and legal fees.

- Broadcasting Expenses**
 (\$2.2 million decrease from FY2022)

Broadcast costs are incurred in line with broadcast revenue, with savings driven by decreases in broadcast revenue relating to the Paramount ANZ broadcast deal in the current period.

- Other Team Expenses**
 (\$0.1m decrease from FY2022)

This increase comprises Subway Socceroos team expenses incurred at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

- Professional and Consultants**
 (\$0.1 million increase from FY2022)

This category includes external expertise engaged across several areas, including audit, security and technology.

- Commissions**
 (\$1.8 million increase from FY2022)

These expenses primarily represent the accounting recognition of contra sponsorship, contracted servicing costs for sponsors and broadcasters, and licensing commissions for

merchandise. Increased contra sponsorship and sponsorship servicing is associated with the Socceroos competing in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, and increases in merchandise licensing commissions as a result of additional sales.

- Communication and Technology**
 (\$5.7 million increase from FY2022)

This amount relates to digital technology, software and IT system costs, telephone and mobile charges. The variance from FY2023 predominantly relates to investment into a new registration platform and increased investment in IT security.

- Other Expenses**
 (\$0.8 million increase from FY2022)

This amount relates to insurance, foreign exchange movements and other miscellaneous costs incurred by Football Australia. Increases in these costs are driven by realised foreign exchange losses.

- Grants and Distributions Expenses**
 (\$1.0 million increase from FY2022)

This represents grants and distributions to community and grassroots football, including via State and Territory Member Federations.

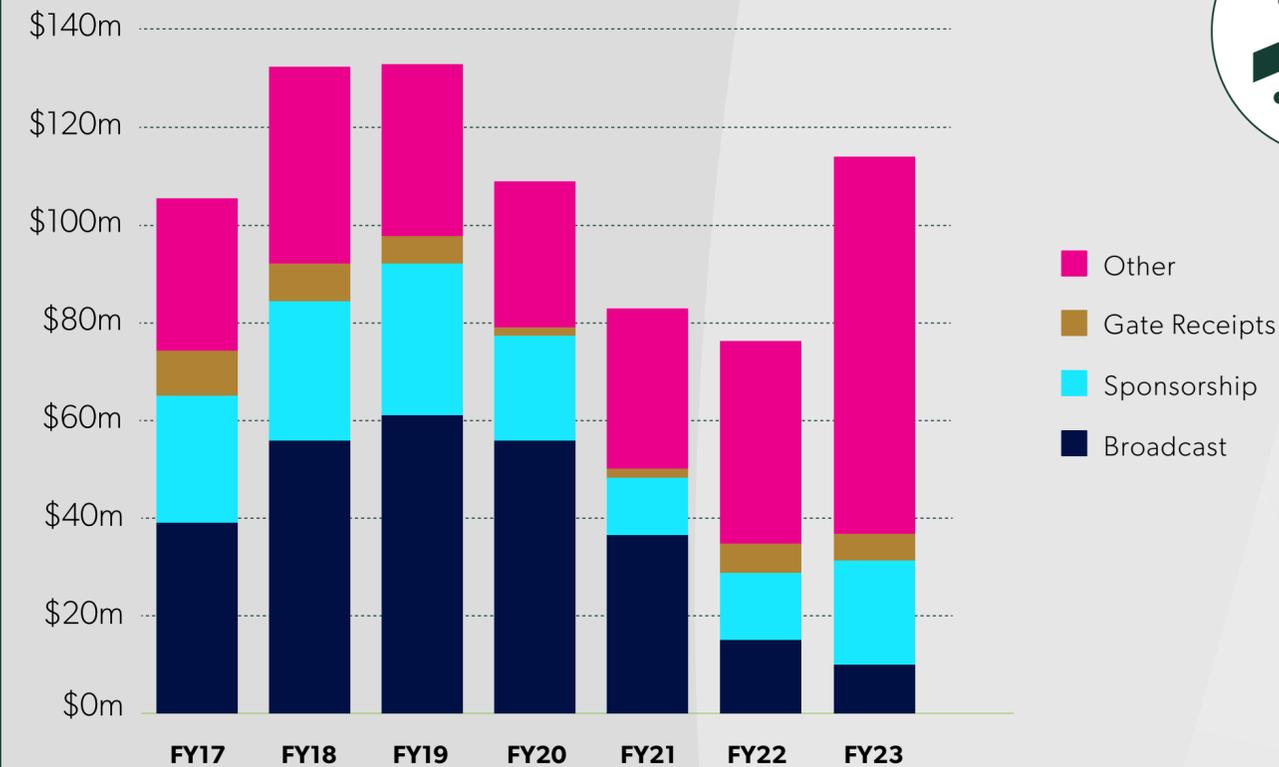


KEY HISTORICAL FINANCIAL COMPARATIVES

NB: FY2022 represents the first year of results after the unbundling of the professional leagues.

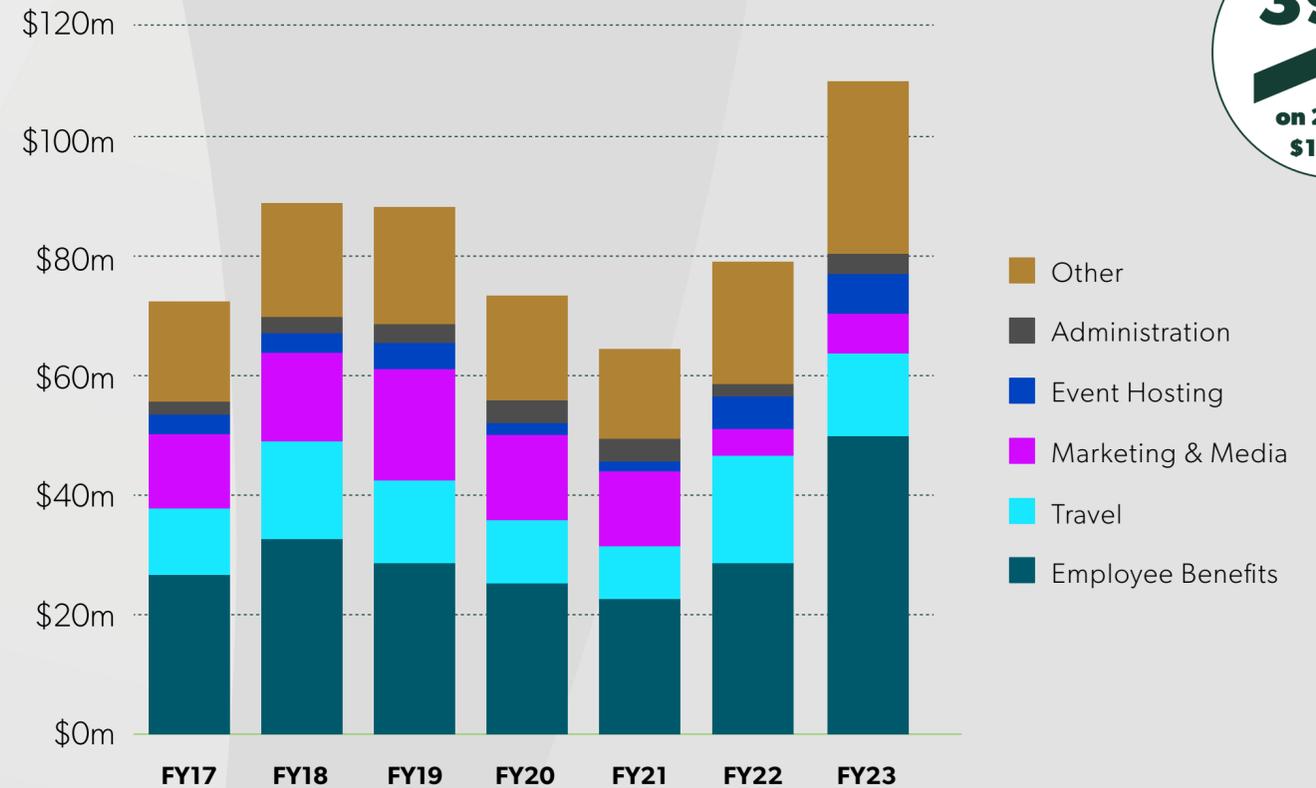
OPERATING REVENUE

48.2%
on 2022 to
\$113.3m



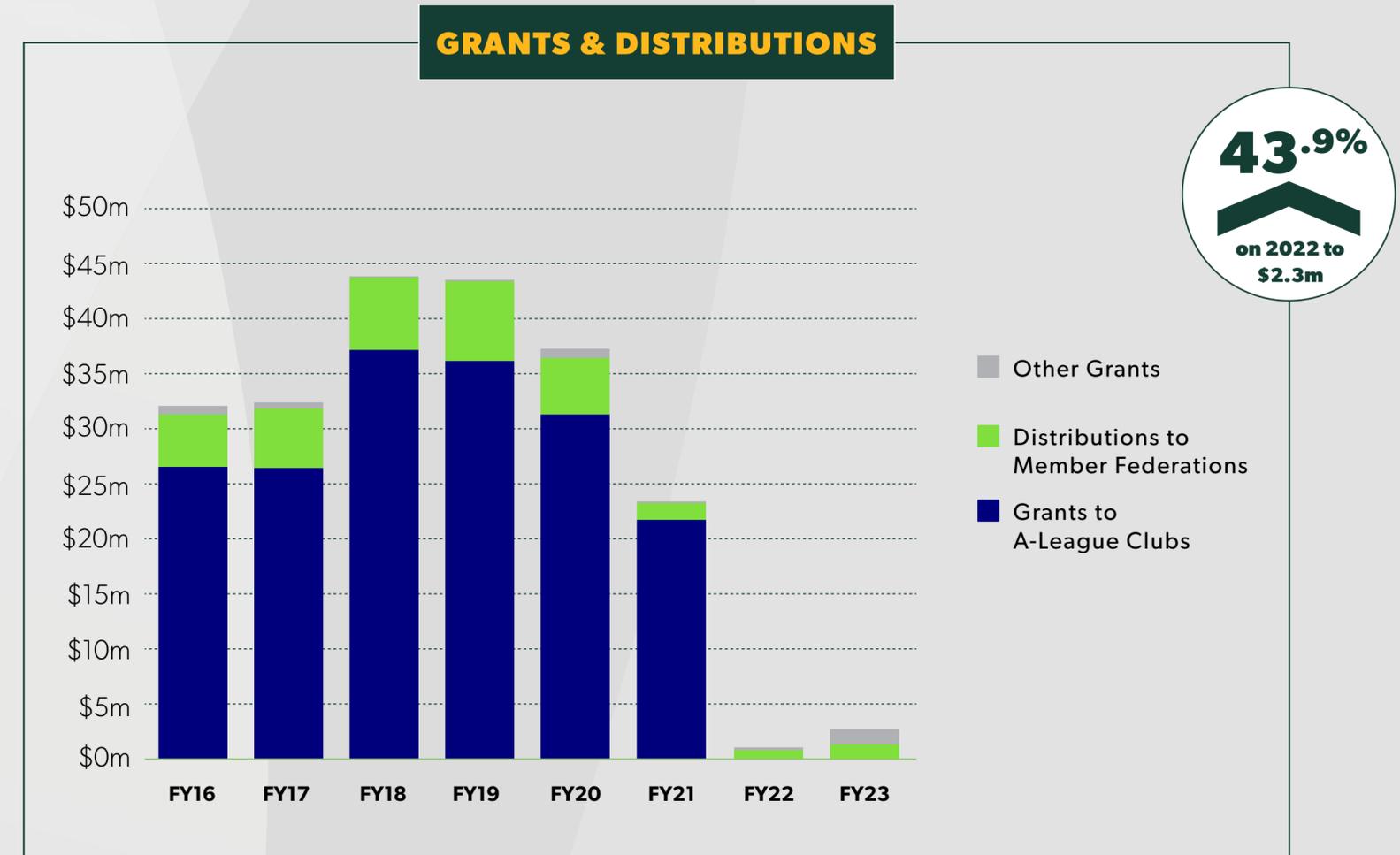
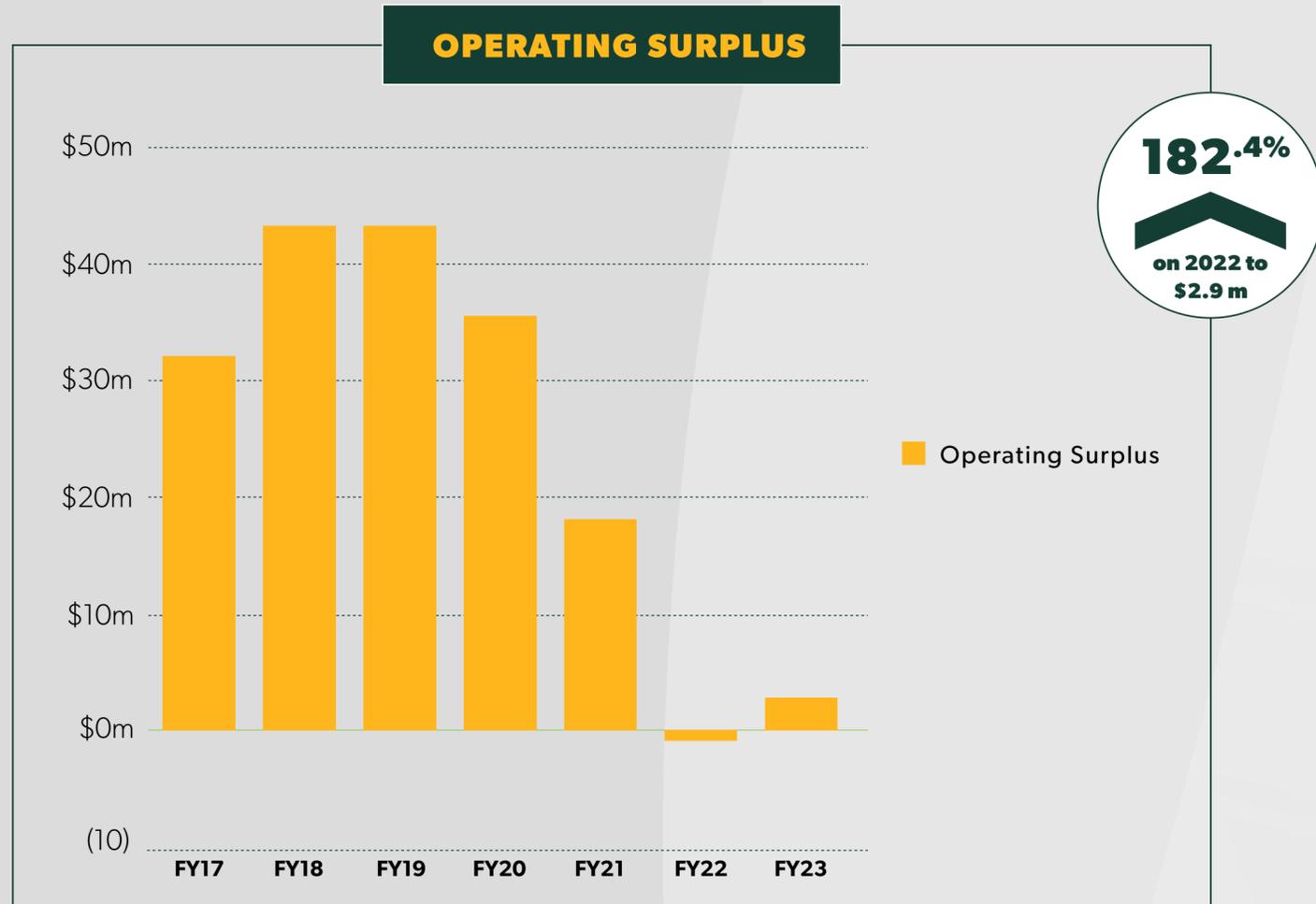
OPERATING EXPENSES

39.9%
on 2022 to
\$110.3m

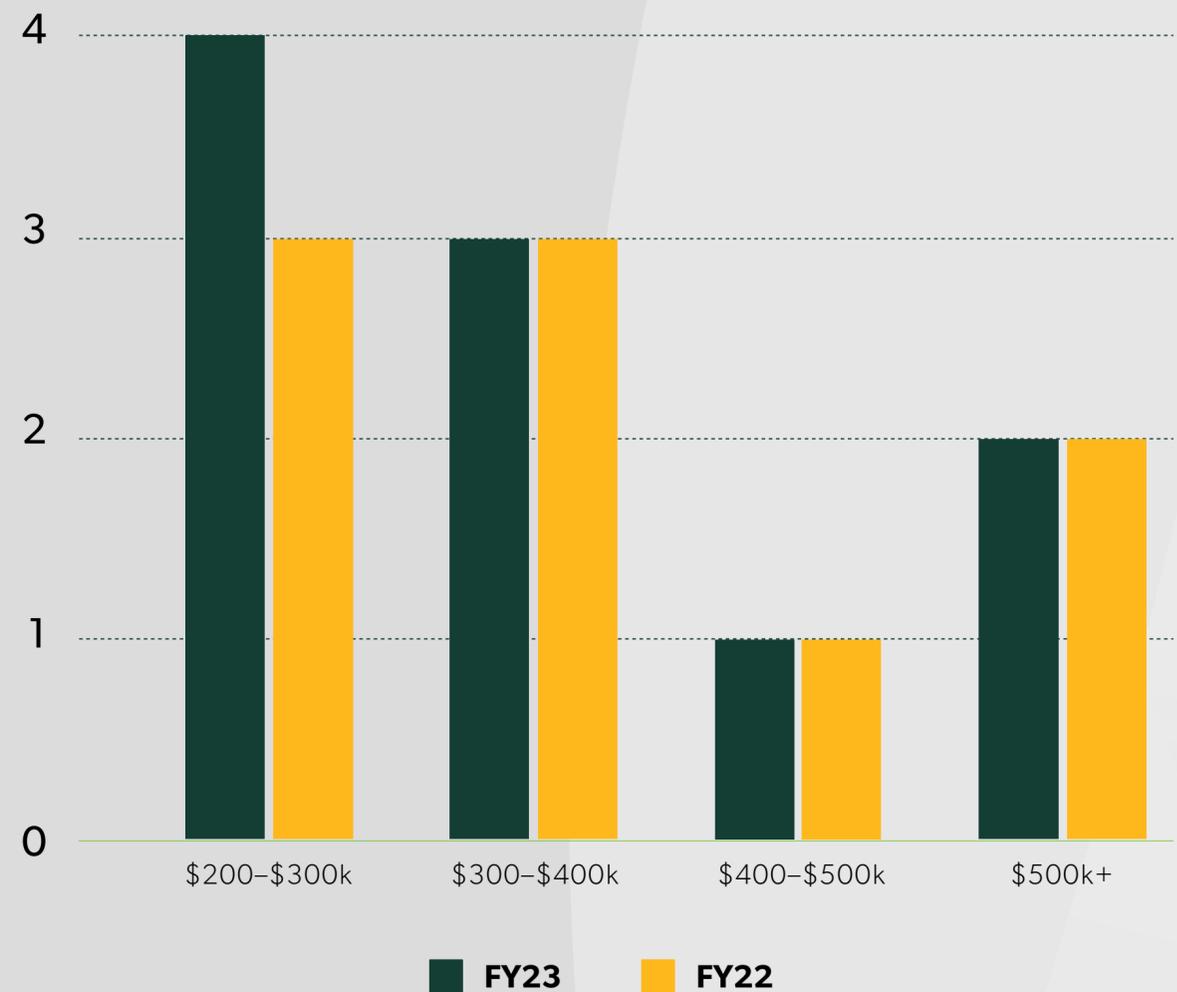


OPERATING SURPLUS

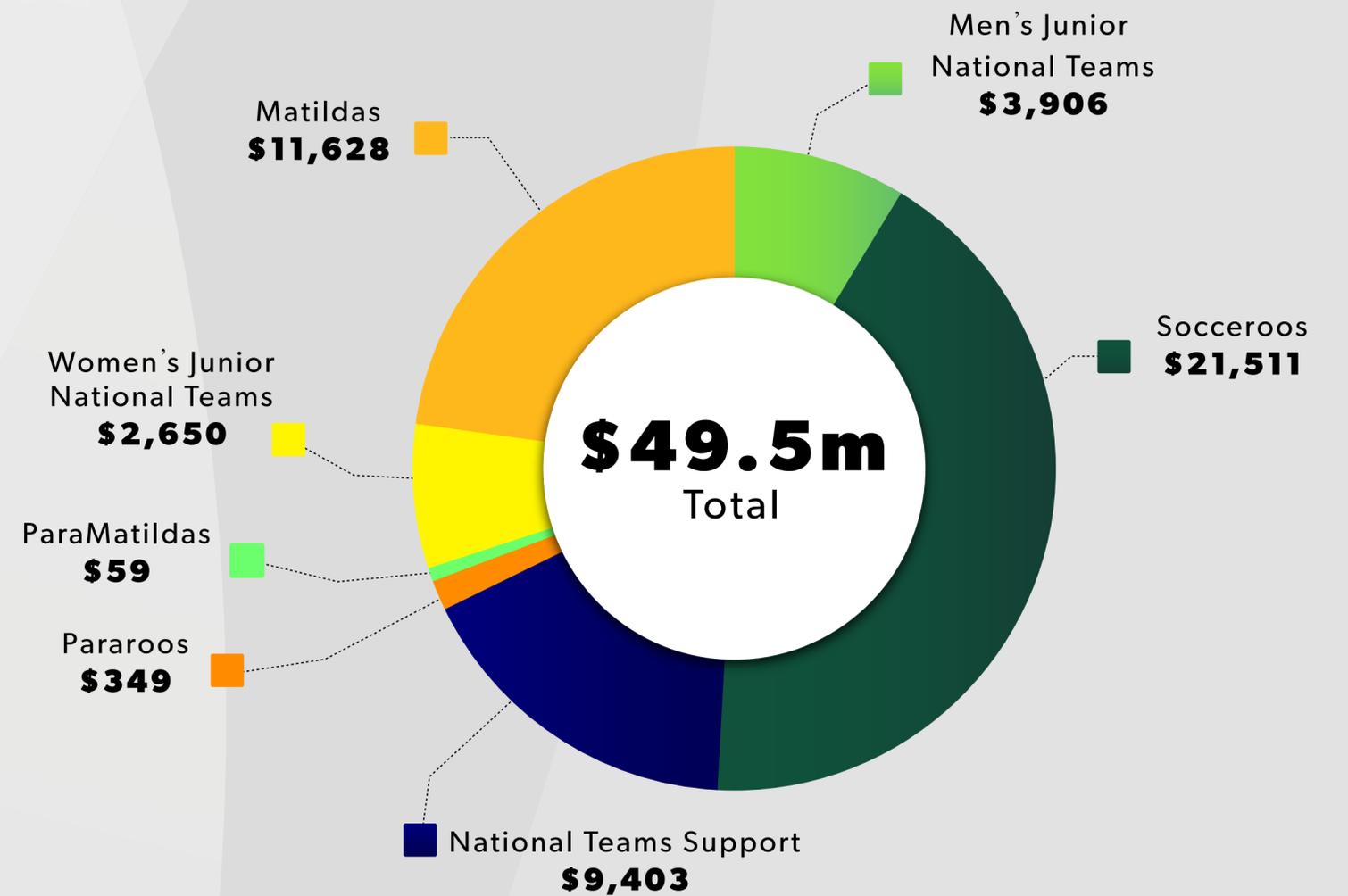
Before Grants and Distributions



NUMBER OF KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL (KMP) WITHIN SALARY BRACKETS



NATIONAL TEAMS INVESTMENT \$'000



ACTIVITY REPORT



FIFA FORWARD 3.0 FUNDING AND AFC ENHANCE FUNDING

FIFA FORWARD 3.0 FUNDING

The FIFA Forward Programme is a development program contributes to supporting Member Associations in laying the foundations for the impactful and tailored development of football. Objectives have been set with FIFA by way of a Contract of Agreed Objectives (CAO), to achieve the development of youth and senior players by providing opportunities for our elite National Team players to regularly obtain match minutes, and ensure they continue to compete successfully at the international level. FIFA has entered into a CAO with Football Australia to include FIFA Forward 3.0 funding by 31 December 2026 to the men's, boys', women's and girls' National Teams, as per the statement below. Upon meeting the FIFA CAO requirements, US\$4 million has been forecasted to be released in Forward 3.0 funds between FY2024 and FY2027. These funds are recognised in the FY2024 Budget and Four-Year Forecast.

NATIONAL TEAM SUPPORT

AREA	OBJECTIVE
National Team support	To drive the National Teams program under Football Australia's One Football Strategy (2022–2026) Pillar 2: Elite Teams & Pathways by 2026, which includes support to boys' and men's National Teams (U17, U20, U23, Senior) and girls' and women's National Teams (U17, U20, Senior).

AFC ENHANCE FUNDING

The AFC Enhance Member Association Programme provides financial grants to Beneficiary Member Associations of the AFC, for the development of football. Football Australia received approval of its application for the 2023 AFC Enhance Member Association Grant for US\$500,000. The AFC Enhance Member Association Programme objectives are designed to facilitate strategic and long-term football development through the provision of funding for activities or projects, which are anchored on the tenets of goal development, including Kick-Off, Pass, Volley and Stadium.



AFC AWARDS

Sam Kerr crowned AFC's Women's Player of the Year; Football Australia wins prestigious grassroots award.

In a proud day for Australian football, Football Australia was thrilled to share two momentous announcements from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Annual Awards in Doha, Qatar, on 31 October 2023.

Firstly, CommBank Matildas' captain Sam Kerr was honoured with the illustrious AFC Women's Player of the Year award. This recognition underscores Kerr's exceptional dedication and contributions to the sport, marking her as one of the elite players not just in Asia, but also globally.

Kerr becomes just the third AFC women's footballer to win the award more than once and the first Australian player – male or female – to win one of Asia's top prizes on multiple occasions. It is also the fifth time an Australian woman has claimed the award.

Parallel to this individual achievement, Football Australia itself was distinguished with the 2023 AFC President's Recognition Award for Grassroots Football, as announced by the Honourable Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, AFC President.

This is a testament to the vibrant football culture in Australia. From the dazzling achievements of players like Sam Kerr, to the tireless efforts invested in grassroots football, Australian football is making strides on every level. It's heartening to see Football Australia's vision, hard work and dedication acknowledged on the Asian stage.

This recognition arrives on the heels of Australia's role as co-host for the groundbreaking FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ – a pivotal moment for women's sport in Australia's history. While elite football was

showcased on the world stage, Football Australia diligently worked behind the scenes, aiming for a lasting legacy.

Central to Football Australia's initiatives was a schools program themed around the FIFA World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, championing schools as a growth nexus for football. The CommBank Matildas shared their cherished memories, narrating tales of the joy and camaraderie they found in football during their school years.

Further augmenting grassroots support was Club Changer, Football Australia's Club Development Program, and the unveiling of OUR GAME – a platform dedicated to women and girls in football. Through OUR GAME, Football Australia aims to inspire, engage and increase female participation in the sport.

Addressing infrastructure, a pioneering national Community Club facilities audit was undertaken, revealing that a mere 36% of changing facilities were female friendly. But adversity bred action, and Football Australia's #EQUALISER campaign secured significant funding, both from the governing body's own efforts and through Federal Government support, ensuring better facilities across the nation.

Our Member Federations, A-League clubs, government partners, grassroots clubs, the diligent team at Football Australia, and the over two million football participants – players, coaches, referees and volunteers have played their crucial parts. Their continuous support forms the bedrock upon which our CommBank Matildas, Subway Socceroos and future stars stand tall.

In celebrating these dual accolades, we are reminded of the strength, unity and passion in Australian football, from grassroots to global arenas.



SCHOOLS

Riding high on the FIFA World Cup™ performances of the Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas, the popularity of football continues to grow, aided by Football Australia's Schools program.

For the second year in a row, statistics released by the Australian Sports Commission revealed that football has clinched the top-ranked sport among schools for the second consecutive year in the Sporting Schools program for Term 2, 2023, reaffirming the popularity of the sport among primary school-aged children.

“WITH A CENTRALISED MODEL OF STATE-BASED JUNIOR PROGRAM OFFICERS MANAGING A WORKFORCE OF 250+ PARTICIPATION OFFICERS (COACHES), FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA'S PROGRAM OFFERINGS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED IN THE LEAD-UP TO, AND DURING, THE FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 2023™.”

Festival of Football explores a combination of classroom-based learning activities aligned with the Australian Curriculum (ACARA) and an opportunity for children to be physically active via a 'Festival of Football' at the end of the four-week program. The campaign video featured insights from Rae Dower, a former teacher and now CommBank Junior Matildas Head Coach.

Design A Football Competition was launched in the lead-up to the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, as a student engagement campaign, encouraging primary school students to use their creativity, inspiration and imagination to design a football while also supporting the CommBank Matildas throughout the tournament. With 3,890 entries, the winning design was announced in August 2023 and the winner received a signed CommBank Matildas jersey, plus 50 footballs bearing the winning design for their school.

Football Fever was a mass-participation program designed for schools and teachers to activate their own mini-tournament during the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. The Football Fever campaign video featured CommBank Matildas Assistant Coach Mel Andreatta and was a huge hit, with 26,000 students taking part in the program throughout the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.



MINIROOS

MiniRoos is designed for kids of all abilities aged 4–11 years. The nationwide initiative uses short, game-based sessions to introduce the sport of football to newcomers in an inclusive way. MiniRoos focuses on learning new skills, being active, making lifelong friends and, potentially, unearthing the next generation of Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas.

MiniRoos Kick-Off playing options continue to diversify to suit a wider range of markets, using Football Australia’s network of Participation Officers (coaches).

“MINIROOS KICK-OFF HAS REACHED ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES IN 2023, AND CONTINUES TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH GIRLS AND BOYS NEW TO THE GAME.”

Girls-only programs have also been established to address the barriers girls face when it comes to participation, as well as to increase Football Australia’s overall strategic objective of 50:50 participation by 2027.

MiniRoos Holiday Clinics are a flexible playing format that offers alternative playing options for new and current participants at a time when most children do not have alternative commitments. With the increased interest during the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, MiniRoos Holiday Clinics continue to exceed capacity in Queensland and Victoria.

MiniRoos Kick-Off for Schools is a before/after school playing option hosted on school grounds, typically as a transition program from Sporting Schools. MiniRoos Kick-Off for Schools enables students to extend their football experience beyond the school setting, without leaving school grounds.



FIFA FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS

The FIFA Football for Schools program was officially launched in the Northern Territory in July 2023, representing the commencement of a suite of initiatives that will see more than \$70,000 of funding injected into schools in the region, delivering football activities designed to promote targeted life skills and education.

FIFA Football for Schools is an ambitious program run by FIFA, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which aims to contribute to the education, development and empowerment of around 700 million children by making football more accessible to both boys and girls.

The commencement of FIFA Football for Schools in the Northern Territory represents a collaboration between FIFA, Football Australia, Football Northern Territory, and the Northern Territory Government.

“FIFA FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS ALSO PROVIDES FREE FOOTBALLS TO SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM AND AN EASY-TO-USE DIGITAL COACHING RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND SESSION LEADERS.”

The Northern Territory is first in Australia to secure FIFA Football for Schools funding and will be integrated into Football Australia’s strategy to engage more school students in football by aligning Football Australia’s core objectives and outcomes, including to encourage students to engage in physical literacy and learning about life principles and skills through sport.



CLUB CHANGER

Club Changer, Football Australia's Club Development Program, was launched in February 2023, aiming to protect and enhance our clubs; make them stronger and more resilient; lead them in building welcoming and inclusive cultures; and educate them on positive environments for players, coaches, volunteers and officials while planning for long-term viability and success.

The program is available to all metro and regional community football clubs from every Member Federation across Australia, providing clubs with access to one-on-one support, resources, forums, webinars and focus groups.

"THROUGH CLUB CHANGER, A FULL-TIME DEDICATED MEMBER OF STAFF IN EACH MEMBER FEDERATION FOCUSES ON CLUB DEVELOPMENT, AND IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS SINCE IT WAS LAUNCHED, THESE MEMBERS SUPPORTED OVER 600 CLUBS TO ENGAGE WITH THE PROGRAM."

CLUB OF THE MONTH

Club of the Month is a recognition of clubs that have achieved the Club Changer 1 Star accreditation. These clubs are nominated by their Member Federation and chosen based on their commitment to developing welcoming and inclusive environments for women and girls in all areas of the game.

This year, the Club of the Month recognition has been awarded to Doreen United Soccer Club, Launceston City Football Club, Hornsby Heights Football Club, Maitland Junior Football Club, and Port Adelaide Pirates Football Club.

FLAG BEARERS

Over 800 boys and girls from Club Changer 1 Star clubs had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ Flag Bearers.

Club Changer 1 Star clubs from all the Member Federations were offered the chance to be part of this opportunity by expressing their interest, and nominating youth female and male participants for all the World Cup matches played in Australian territory.





NATIONAL ROADSHOWS

The Club Changer team has travelled the country visiting every Member Federation, inviting all clubs in every region to join for a presentation of the program.

“THE ROADSHOWS HAD AN ATTENDANCE OF OVER 200 CLUBS, WHICH WERE INTRODUCED TO CLUB CHANGER AND STARTED WORKING ON THEIR ACTION PLANS ACCORDING TO THEIR STATUS.”

BEYOND GREATNESS™ COMMUNITY FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

On Saturday 19 August, prior to the CommBank Matildas playing Sweden in the third-place play-off, four teams represented by 40 female players between 14 and 16 years old played in the Beyond Greatness™ Community Football Tournament, organised by FIFA at the iconic Sydney Opera House.

Kissing Point Football Club and Hurlstone Park Wanderers Football Club were selected to represent the Club Changer Program due to their commitment to improve women's football within their community.



TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

A Year of Advancements

UPDATED COACH EDUCATION DIPLOMA COURSES TO RE-ALIGN WITH AFC AND UEFA CONVENTIONS

One of our most significant accomplishments this year has been the complete rewrite of all coaching courses, from MiniRoos to the A Diploma, to align with the AFC Coaching Convention and UEFA guidelines. This was a monumental undertaking, requiring meticulous attention to detail and collaboration with all members of the Technical Department. Our aim was clear: to ensure coaches across Australia receive education that is globally recognised and of the highest quality. The alignment with AFC Convention and UEFA guidelines ensures our coaching curriculum is on par with international standards.

IN-SERVICE MEMBER FEDERATIONS

In our commitment to spreading knowledge and expertise, we conducted in-service programs for all Member Federations. These programs provided an opportunity for federations to stay updated with the latest coaching methodologies and curriculum changes. It allowed us to collaborate closely with each federation, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose in Coach Education.

PARTNERSHIP WITH FIFA FOR 2024 EDUCATORS ONSITE WORKSHOP AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

In 2023, Football Australia hosted FIFA High-Performance Department members April Hendrichs and Richard Allen in Sydney, to focus on unearthing and developing more future CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos. They discussed FIFA's Talent Development Scheme (TDS), evaluated Football Australia's Ecosystem and Performance Gap Report, and assessed their own TDS strategy for implementation in the coming year. The TDS aims to enhance talent development sustainability by addressing barriers and challenges faced by Member Associations. Chief Football Officer, Ernie Merrick, emphasised the goal of identifying and nurturing talent regardless of circumstances. The strategy includes creating monitoring lists, increasing Elite Matches, and using technology for scouting. The Talent ID App, which was showcased, is designed to overcome geographical challenges in talent identification. The visit was deemed highly beneficial, with April Hendrichs expressing





admiration for Football Australia’s approach and foreseeing positive outcomes from the TDS in the next decade. Football Australia plans to launch its Technical Development Scheme in 2023.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce our partnership with FIFA for the Educators Onsite Workshop, scheduled to take place in Melbourne in 2024. This landmark event will bring together Member Federations, Technical Directors and Coach Education Managers, as well as FIFA experts from around the world, to exchange ideas, share best practices and further elevate Coach Education standards.

Further, we have been accepted as a participant in the FIFA TDS. The FIFA funding for this program will enable us to dramatically improve talent identification and collect useful video and biometric data across all Member Federations.

FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA CREATES AN EXPERT WORKING GROUP TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE CONCUSSION THROUGH HEADING

Football Australia’s Technical Department aims to have a world-leading Coach Education approach to heading in junior football and has engaged an expert working group (EWG) to review all the available evidence on this topic. This group has designed a comprehensive range of junior playing formats, which reduces (but doesn’t ban) the need to head the ball while developing the full scope of essential technical ball skills. Dr Kerry Peek, a key member of Football Australia’s EWG, is also the Lead of FIFA’s Expert Group on Heading. FIFA is looking to implement similar recommendations to that of Football Australia, which will make Football Australia a world leader in this space.

FUTURE MATILDAS PROGRAM

Leah Blayney is Head Coach of the Future Matildas (FM) Program and has had immense success in producing CommBank Matildas. Twelve

of the current Matildas Squad spent multiple years in the FM Program. Only one player from the A-League Women’s, who debuted for the CommBank Matildas, was recruited from outside the FM Program.

Overall, this highlights the strong connection between the FM Program and the Matildas as a clear elite player pathway. Many of these players have gone on to become regular Matildas and competed in the very successful FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. Several have signed major contracts with overseas teams: Kyra Cooney-Cross (Arsenal), Clare Hunt (Paris Saint-Germain), Courtney Nevin (Leicester City), Charlotte Grant (Vittsjö GIK), Remy Siemsen (Leicester City) and Mary Fowler (Man City).

Of the 24 players who comprise the current U23 squad selected for matches in Italy, 20 players are currently participating in the FM Program or have just graduated in 2022–2023 from overseas clubs.

Most recent overseas graduates include Charlie Rule (three years in the program, now with Brighton & Hove Albion), and Sarah Hunter (three years in the program, now with Paris FC). Charlie and Sarah both graduated in August 2023. Polly Doran and Winonah Heatley were both two years in the program and have transferred to Crystal Palace, and Nordsjælland in Denmark respectively.

Since the program has expanded to other states, the pathways for players have improved. Three players based in our Victoria FM Program have been selected for the newly formed U23 National Team.

IN SUMMARY

The year 2023 has been a remarkable year for Coach Education at Football Australia. We have successfully aligned our courses with international standards, ensured the qualification and experience of our tutors, conducted in-service programs for Member Federations, and secured a prestigious partnership with FIFA for an Educators Onsite Workshop in 2024. These achievements underscore our unwavering commitment to raising the standard of Coach Education across the country.



TALENT IDENTIFICATION

We are pleased to provide an update on the significant progress made during the period July 2022 to June 2023 in Football Australia's ongoing endeavour to revamp its Talent Identification (TID) processes. This initiative aligns with Football Australia's commitment to creating a world-class platform for youth development, in accordance with Principle 5 of Football Australia's XI Principles.

KEY MILESTONES AND INITIATIVES

1 COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND CONSULTATION

Football Australia undertook a thorough internal review and engaged in consultation with Member Federations to inform the overhaul of the TID processes.

FIFA's **Global Competitive Balance Report** was instrumental in validating the imperative for change, reinforcing Football Australia's dedication to give every talent a chance.

2 INTEGRATION OF FIFA RECOMMENDATIONS

Football Australia's Technical Department integrated and executed several of FIFA's recommendations, enhancing the effectiveness of our TID efforts.

3 FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA ONE FOOTBALL STRATEGY 2022–2026

In November 2022, Football Australia unveiled the Football Australia One Football Strategy 2022–2026.

Pillar 2 of the strategy, titled Elite Teams & Pathways, saw a thoughtful alignment of the Talent ID Strategy, emphasising the need for refined player identification and tracking methods.

4 INTRODUCTION OF MULTIPLE CAPTURE POINTS

Our TID process has a core focus on Multiple Capture Points.

This inclusive approach ensures a diverse assessment of players at various developmental stages and settings over an extended period.





Players from regional areas, schools, clubs, elite programs and academies are tracked and monitored, ensuring a holistic evaluation process.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT MATCHES

Formerly known as Elite Matches, these best vs. best games organised by Member Federations play a pivotal role as Talent ID platforms.

Participants from various teams engage in 11-vs.-11 matches, where talented players are brought together from Member Federation programs, National Premier Leagues clubs, A-Leagues clubs, schools and regional areas.

NATIONAL TID EVENTS

Events such as the National Youth Championships organised by Football Australia provide players with the opportunity to showcase their skills in front of National Team Coaches and compete in a 'tournament mode', facing the challenges they may face in the future in Junior National Teams.

Detailed technical, bio-maturation and physical profiles are developed, facilitating team selections and long-term player development tracking.

EMPHASIS ON SCHOOL MATCHES AND REGIONAL EVENTS

These events serve as crucial talent identification opportunities, ensuring we are giving players outside of metro/city programs the chance for a high level of talent assessment.

Football Australia collaborates in educating teacher-coaches on Talent ID practices within the school system.

TALENT ID WEBFORM

A secure web platform has been designed and implemented, which gives accredited coaches the opportunity to submit technical assessments based on six Talent Descriptors, ensuring a unified approach and centralised data storage.

Notably, the webform has garnered widespread engagement, with over 300 coaches across Australia submitting reports.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Total of 1,905 players identified nationwide, with 7,929 assessments conducted.

“MORE THAN 52% OF PLAYERS WHO WERE REPORTED ON MORE THAN ONCE, CAME FROM NPL CLUBS AND OUTSIDE OF A-LEAGUE ACADEMIES OR MEMBER FEDERATION NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE (NTC) PROGRAMS.”

A breakdown of reports showed 56% of reports were on male players, while 44% were on female players.

These achievements are just the first steps we are taking going forward with Talent ID Strategy, reaffirming Football Australia's unwavering commitment to providing every talent with a chance to develop into our future Socceroos and Matildas.



COACH EDUCATION

Coach Education – A Year of Advancements

In the world of football, the importance of Coach Education is becoming increasingly prioritised. It is the cornerstone of developing skilled and knowledgeable coaches who, in turn, nurture the talents of players, shaping the future of our game. In this Annual Report, we are proud to present our journey of advancing Coach Education for Football Australia in the year 2023.

ALIGNING WITH AFC CONVENTION AND UEFA GUIDELINES

One of our most significant accomplishments this year has been the complete rewrite of all coaching courses, from MiniRoos to the A Diploma, to align with both the AFC Coaching Convention, and UEFA guidelines. This was a monumental undertaking requiring meticulous attention to detail and collaboration with all members of the Technical Department. Our aim was clear: to ensure coaches across Australia receive education that is globally recognised and of the highest quality.

“THE ALIGNMENT WITH THE AFC COACHING CONVENTION AND UEFA GUIDELINES ENSURES OUR COACHING CURRICULUM IS ON PAR WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.”

REVISED NATIONAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Central to our commitment to excellence in Coach Education is the revised **National Policy and Procedure Manual**, which serves as the compass for all our coaching programs. This comprehensive manual reflects our dedication to transparency, consistency and quality assurance in Coach Education. It outlines the standards, protocols and best practices that underpin our coaching courses, ensuring that every coach, tutor and Member Federation operates in alignment with our shared vision. This manual, continually refined and updated, exemplifies our unwavering commitment to raising the bar in Coach Education and ensuring a consistent, world-class experience for all involved in Australian football.





ENSURING QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED COACH EDUCATION TUTORS

At Football Australia, we understand that the effectiveness of Coach Education programs hinges on the quality of our tutors. Therefore, we implemented strict guidelines to ensure that all Coach Education tutors are correctly trained and possess the necessary qualifications and experience. This initiative is critical in raising the standard of Coach Education across the country.

“OUR TUTORS ARE THE BACKBONE OF OUR COACHING PROGRAMS, AND THEIR EXPERTISE DIRECTLY IMPACTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF COACHES AT ALL LEVELS. BY MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS FOR OUR TUTORS, WE ARE INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL.”

MEMBER FEDERATION IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS

In our commitment to spreading knowledge and expertise, we conducted in-service programs for all Member Federations. These programs provided an opportunity for federations to stay updated with the latest coaching methodologies and curriculum changes. It allowed us to collaborate closely with each federation, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose in Coach Education. The in-service initiatives also helped us gather valuable feedback from Member Federations, enabling us to fine-tune our coaching programs to better meet the needs of each region. This decentralised approach to Coach Education ensures our efforts are tailored to the unique characteristics and challenges faced in different parts of the country.

PARTNERSHIP WITH FIFA FOR 2024 EDUCATORS ONSITE WORKSHOP

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce our partnership with FIFA for the Educators Onsite Workshop, scheduled to take place in Melbourne in 2024. This landmark event will bring together Member Federations Technical Directors and Coach Education Managers, as well as FIFA experts from around the world, to exchange ideas, share best practices and further elevate Coach Education standards. The workshop will not only provide a platform for international collaboration but also shine a spotlight on Australia's commitment to Coach Education excellence. It will be an invaluable opportunity for our coaches and educators to learn from the best.

In summary, the year 2023 has been a remarkable one for Coach Education at Football Australia. We have successfully aligned our courses with international standards, ensured the qualification and experience of our tutors, conducted in-service programs for Member Federations, and secured a prestigious partnership with FIFA for an Educators Onsite Workshop in 2024. These achievements underscore our unwavering commitment to raising the standard of Coach Education across the country and beyond. We look forward to a future where Australian coaches are recognised as among the best in the world, and where the quality of our coaching becomes a hallmark of excellence in football education.



MATCH OFFICIALS

Over the past year, the Football Australia Refereeing Department has undergone transformation in response to the evolving landscape of refereeing. With a focus on increased professionalism and accountability, our high-performance match official panels now benefit from augmented staffing and performance resources to stay attuned to the modern game.

In November 2022, Football Australia introduced the groundbreaking National Wellbeing Role for Referees, receiving resounding support from both the department and the panels. This pioneering role, dedicated exclusively to referees, has been created to craft a world-class wellbeing strategy.

For the first time, individual referee support encompasses areas such as relationship management with employers and educational institutions, injury and illness assistance, parental leave support, and mental health referrals. Furthermore, a wellbeing allowance has been implemented for our high-performance officials.

“COMPLEMENTING THESE EFFORTS, WEBINARS HAVE COVERED A DIVERSE ARRAY OF TOPICS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES WITH ACADEMIES AND MEMBER FEDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN FOSTERING HOLISTIC WELLBEING, ENSURING REFEREES CONNECT, LEARN, THRIVE AND SUCCEED, ON AND OFF THE FIELD.”

As Australian football continues its dramatic progression, Football Australia has introduced a National Refereeing Philosophy, emphasising standardisation and global leadership. This philosophy underscores the importance of balancing technical precision with intuitive game management, empathy and adaptability, for contextual decision-making. It guides the evolution of Australian football by spanning officiating, coaching, education, feedback and selection.





To bridge the gap between identification and competition within our framework, Football Australia has established a Referee Academy. This initiative prepares match officials for the National Second Tier and A-Leagues, aligning closely with the National Refereeing Philosophy.

The inaugural cohort of 12 individuals were selected through a rigorous nomination and assessment process, including theoretical and video analysis exercises, physical fitness evaluations, football understanding assessments and the development of individual performance plans.

“ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS BENEFIT FROM ONLINE EDUCATIONAL LECTURES, PERSONALISED COACHING SESSIONS FACILITATED BY NATIONAL LEAGUE OFFICIALS AND COACHES, AND ATTENDANCE AT THE FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA HIGH-PERFORMANCE MATCH OFFICIAL SEMINAR.”

In September 2023, we launched an interactive online Laws of the Game experience to enhance comprehension. Additionally, the introduction of a Learning and Development role signals our commitment to advancing the community-based junior and senior referee education curriculum in upcoming phases.

Strategic partnerships have flourished with key organisations such as the Japan Football Association, Korea Football Association, New Zealand Football, the Oceania Football Confederation, The Football Association (England), and the Professional Game Match Officials Limited, providing valuable international opportunities for our match officials.

On the international stage, Australian referees continued to excel in AFC competitions over the past year. An all-Australian match official team, led by referee Shaun Evans, was appointed to the 2022 AFC Cup Final™.

Several Australian match officials, including Chris Beath, Anton Shchetinin, Ashley Beecham and Shaun Evans, were chosen to officiate at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. Additionally, Kate Jacewicz, Casey Reibelt, and Joanna Charaktis represented Australia at the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

Domestically, the 2022–23 A-Leagues Referees of the Year were FIFA World Cup™ referees Casey Reibelt and the retiring Chris Beath, who concluded his outstanding career at the end of the season.



LEGACY '23

The year 2023 has been history-defining for football and women's sport in Australia. Never before have we seen our nation so united in football, as we saw during the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. The CommBank Matildas captured the heart, soul and imagination of a nation, and the future of football in Australia is bright.

When Football Australia submitted a bid to co-host the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, we made a commitment to transform the football landscape and create an inclusive ecosystem that allows everyone to engage, participate, compete and belong.

Launched in February 2021, *Legacy '23* is an ambitious five-pillar plan to ensure we deliver positive and enduring benefits for Australia's largest community sport, beyond 2023.



LEGACY '23 GOALS

- 50:50 gender participation.
- Increased female representation in key roles, including leadership and coaching.
- Progressive pathways for the next generation of talent.
- Gender-neutral/inclusive community facilities.
- Sustained high-performance funding.

Key highlights to date include:

“SINCE 2021, FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA HAS UNLOCKED \$389,746,000 FOR LEGACY-RELATED PROJECTS THROUGH FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS. FURTHERMORE, IN AUGUST 2023, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED A DEDICATED \$200-MILLION FUND TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES IN WOMEN’S SPORT.”

- Strengthened pathways, including three brand new state ‘Homes of Football’ in South Australia, Western Australia, and Victoria.
- Gained a 150% increase in sponsorship from 2020–2023.
- Launched Club Changer – support and resources to build capacity and encourage inclusive cultures at more than 2,400 clubs.
- Launched a dedicated Women’s and Girls’ brand – OUR GAME.
- Developed leadership programs to address the underrepresentation of women across all parts of the game.
- Leading Australian and Football diplomacy initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region.

The continued growth in football participation rates, along with the expected surge in demand, has underlined the importance of prioritising community infrastructure capacity and capability as a long-term strategic objective for all states and territories, coupled with the need to continue to invest in high-performance programs for our Women’s National Teams.

With a goal to become the first community sport to achieve gender parity in participation, Football Australia will continue to work towards 100% female-friendly and accessible change rooms across all community football facilities.

Co-hosting some of the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ matches on home soil gifted us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enhance and deepen engagement with hundreds and thousands of fans, and re-position Australian football. But a lasting legacy requires sustained funding and investment at all levels of the game, to ensure we can level the playing field of Australia’s largest community participation sport.

“IT IS ONLY IN ADDRESSING THESE GAPS THAT AUSTRALIA CAN ENJOY A LASTING LEGACY. WHILE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL’S PAST MAY BE EASILY MISSED, THE PATH TO ITS FUTURE HAS NEVER LOOKED SO CLEAR AND BRIGHT.”

As a proud host nation, the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ delivered the biggest and best ever tournament, along with a number of firsts and other records:

- Expansion from 24 to 32 teams.
- First ever FIFA tournament to be held across two confederations (the AFC and OFC).
- First time the women’s teams were provided the same conditions, resources and access to facilities as the men’s teams.





- First time integrating the FIFA Fan Festival.
- Morocco defender Nouhaila Benzina became the first senior-level player ever to wear a hijab while participating in a game at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™.
- Korea Republic's Casey Phair (aged 16 years, 26 days) became the youngest player to make an appearance in FIFA Women's World Cup™ history.
- First FIFA Women's World Cup™ to break even financially.

LEGACY IN NUMBERS

- CommBank Matildas' seven matches during the tournament attracted 403,136 fans, with an average of 57,591 for each match, accounting for 99.92% capacity at each venue.
- Record sales in merchandise with CommBank Matildas jerseys outselling past editions 13:1.
- At least 64% of Australians tuned in to watch the Semi-Final against England on 19 August, making it the most watched TV program since the OzTAM audience measurement system started in 2001. The national broadcast reach for this match was 11.15 million.
- Australia is only the second team to host a FIFA Women's World Cup™ and finish in the top four after the USA (winners in 1999, third place in 2003).
- The CommBank Matildas is Australia's most valuable national sporting team and the worth of its brand has increased fivefold since the start of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.



OUR GAME

OUR GAME is an initiative launched by Football Australia in December 2021 to harness the power of football in building an inclusive and diverse environment for women and girls. The mission of **OUR GAME** is to elevate, inform, and unleash a passionate community that drives the future of women's football. It aims to increase awareness and visibility of women and girls in football, facilitate access to participation opportunities, and transform how they perceive their involvement in the game.

Through **OUR GAME**, we aim to harness the power of football to build an inclusive and diverse game that embraces, positively influences, celebrates and elevates women and girls, to own and drive the future of women's football.

“THIS IS OUR PASSION, OUR SPORT. THIS IS THE TIME FOR ALL OF US TO BE PART OF FOOTBALL TOGETHER AND TAKE IT FORWARD, BECAUSE THIS IS OUR GAME.”

KEY INITIATIVES THROUGH 2023:

1. #LOVEOURGAME CAMPAIGN LAUNCH
2. OUR GAME WOMEN AND NON-BINARY PERSONS IN MEDIA PROGRAM
3. FEMALE FOOTBALL WEEK
4. LEGO X OUR GAME
5. FIFA FAN FESTIVAL
6. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
7. REFEREE MEET & GREET





WOMEN IN MEDIA INTERN TESTIMONIAL

'As an emerging photographer within the sports industry, obtaining this internship was nothing short of a dream come true. Programs, such as the Our Game Media internship, are critical to ensure that all realms of football in Australia reach gender equality. Just as young girls can dream to be a Matilda (more so now than ever!), this can now extend to roles in football media with increased opportunities and visibility.

'I feel better placed with my future as a sports photographer with this internship. Not only has my imagery improved, but I have also obtained various opportunities to shoot football at such a high level. I don't think many people can say that they have captured a FIFA World Cup™ at the age of 19! I am immensely grateful and humbled to be a participant in a program I am so passionate about.'

Maya Thompson, Photography Participant

KEY OUR GAME STATISTICS

WEBSITE TRAFFIC

10,227 users (26 May - November)

90% Australian based users

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

12,933 subscribers

SOCIAL STATS

6,824 followers

Total Impressions 4,290,821 | 1,766.6% increase

Video Views 1,767,945 | 3,044.1% increase

Total Engagement 253,993 | 2,050.3% increase

Follower Growth 5,494 | 1,160.1% increase

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Launched in 2023, the Women in Leadership Program, designed in collaboration with Ebru Köksal, is an intensive course aimed at women currently working in or aspiring to work in football.

Football Australia acknowledges the considerable support of the Australian Government through the Australian Sports Commission in supporting the Legacy '23 plan and its initiatives.



HOME OF THE MATILDAS

The most significant infrastructure accomplishment in the history of Australian football, the Home of the Matildas at La Trobe University, was officially opened on 3 July 2023, ahead of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

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

Designed by leading female architects, the precinct features two state-of-the-art hybrid turf pitches, two FIFA-grade synthetic pitches, 12 change rooms (including the CommBank Matildas' own customised change room), a fully-equipped gym, outstanding medical facilities, modern wet recovery areas, premium function rooms, coaching development spaces and a boutique, 800-seat grandstand with elevated sight lines.

The facility will deliver an experience unparalleled in Australian football and has been designed with the aspiration of becoming the finest female-focused facility in Australasia.

“HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITY FOOTBALLERS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAIN AND PLAY ON THE SAME FIELDS AS THEIR HEROES, CREATING A TANGIBLE PATHWAY FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO THE ELITE AT A SINGLE VENUE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME.”

From July to December 2023 the facility played host to:

- the Jamaican Women's National Football Team during the FIFA Women's World Cup™
- multiple other teams as a Venue Specific Training Site (VSTS)
- Football Victoria's Nike FC Cup Final
- the 2023 IFCPF Asia–Oceania Championships (Para Asian Cup)
- Melbourne Victory Women's 2023/2024 as a training base
- Melbourne Victory A-League Women's 2023/2024 matches.

The Home of the Matildas will provide our most talented Australian Women's National Team footballers and staff the opportunity to thrive, and a place of excellence for the next generation to develop.



FIRST NATIONS

As the Australian peak representative body for the 'world's best game, Football Australia acknowledges and celebrates the contributions of First Nations people, which serves as a testament to the sport's deep cultural richness and its commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

First Nations communities have an invaluable impact on the nation's football landscape, from grassroots to the elite level. As we undertake this journey through our annual review, we take pride in showcasing the initiatives and achievements that emphasise the integral role First Nations people play in the sport, reinforcing our dedication to fostering a more diverse and inclusive football community.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

1. FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ADVISORY GROUP

In our pursuit of inclusivity and representation, Football Australia established the National Indigenous Advisory Group (NIAG) in 2021, a collective of respected leaders, experts, and advocates within the First Nations communities. This group provides valuable insights, guidance and recommendations that contribute to the formulation and implementation of inclusive policies and programs within Australian football.

2. FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023™ FIRST SISTERS OF COUNTRY EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL

In preparation for the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, Football Australia introduced the First Sisters of Country whānau by sea and sky expert advisory panel. Comprising three Football Australia NIAG representatives with diverse expertise, this panel ensured the tournament paid due respect to First Nations cultures, fostering meaningful engagement with these communities, both in the lead-up to and during the event. Notable achievements from this panel included policy reform to include traditional place names and First Nations flags, to have global exposure through the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

3. RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Football Australia remains steadfast in its commitment to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a comprehensive strategy that underlines our organisation's commitment to reconciliation and the development of meaningful relationships with First Nations communities. The successful completion of our most recent RAP earlier this year marked a significant milestone. We are now dedicated to launching the next RAP in 2024, further solidifying our commitment to fostering unity, understanding and respect.





4. PARTICIPATION, LEGACY – NAIDOC CUP

One of our proudest initiatives, the NAIDOC Cup continues to be a testament to our commitment to fostering First Nations participation in football. Held in New South Wales and Northern New South Wales, this grassroots program not only promotes the sport, but also honours the heritage and culture of First Nations communities, thus creating lasting connections and memories.

5. FIRST NATIONS PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION PROGRAMS

Football Australia continues to invest in programs that support the participation and representation of First Nations communities in the world of football. The NAIDOC Cup, for instance, exemplifies the power of grassroots initiatives in bringing communities together and introducing young talents to the sport. Moreover, our dedication to fostering the representation of First Nations individuals in coaching, officiating and administrative positions remains unwavering. We actively support mentorship programs designed to encourage individuals from First Nations communities to pursue careers within the football ecosystem.

“IN CELEBRATING FIRST NATIONS EXCELLENCE IN FOOTBALL, WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HIGHLIGHT THE INAUGURAL INVITATIONAL XI TEAM.”

This team comprised a first nations girls’ squad, which competed at the National Youth Championships. Their participation showcased the incredible talent and potential within First Nations communities and marked a significant step forward in promoting diversity in the sport. Our annual Invitational XI at the National Youth Championships is a showcase of First Nations talent and a testament to our commitment to First Nations Football development.

We also take immense pride in First Nations players in our National Teams, including proud Anaiwan woman Kyah Simon and Noongar role model Lydia Williams within the CommBank Matildas. These individuals serve as role models and symbols of excellence, not only representing their communities but also inspiring the next generation of talent. Their contributions to Australian football bring a sense of pride and achievement to our nation’s sporting landscape.



LGBTQIA+

To celebrate the commencement of Sydney World Pride in February 2023, Football Australia activated a pride theme integration throughout an Australian international match for the first time, during the Cup of Nations match between the CommBank Matildas and Spain at CommBank Stadium. The partnership built on the 2022 initiatives, including participation in the Pride Cup and the Mardi Gras Parade for the first time.

“IN AN ACT OF SOLIDARITY, THE COMMBANK MATILDAS WERE THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SPORTING TEAM TO WEAR RAINBOW-NUMBERED JERSEYS, ACKNOWLEDGING AND CELEBRATING THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY. THE DECISION TO WEAR THE RAINBOW-NUMBERED JERSEYS WAS UNANIMOUS, WITH CAPTAIN SAM KERR ALSO DONNING THE PRIDE PROGRESS CAPTAINS’ ARMBAND.”

Football Australia continues its inclusion work as a founding member of Pride in Sport, providing refresher education and training programs for its workforce and football stakeholders.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Like so many other parts of Football Australia, a dominant theme of the year was ensuring that the entire country felt a connection to the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

A keynote speech given by FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, during the FIFA Women's World Cup™ Trophy Tour's visit to Canberra and Australia's Parliament House spoke to the impact of the tournament in Australia, on and off the field. Flanked by Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, and Federal Sports Minister, Anika Wells, the FIFA President spoke of the quality of the event, and football's role in driving broader societal outcomes: social inclusion, building community, economic growth, physical health, and mental health.

“BOTH THE FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS HEARD THE CALL AND IN 2023 THERE WERE FURTHER FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS, ENSURING A LEGACY FROM THE FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP™.”

The Queensland Government made a \$4-million contribution to a Queensland Women's Football Legacy Fund in July, which will be matched dollar for dollar by other funding sources. Aligned to Football Australia's *Legacy '23* plan, this will provide more opportunities for women and girl footballers in Queensland.

The Western Australia Government chose the homecoming of Sam Kerr at the AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers to announce a \$9.3-million investment in grassroots football, an expansion of the State Football Centre, and a facilities grant program to support female teams in the National Premier Leagues.

Equally significant was the Australian Government's announcement of a \$200-million commitment to female football facilities and equipment, as part of the Play Our Way grants program. As the most popular team-based participation sport in the nation, and with an expected surge of up to 20% in grassroots participation (mostly by women and girls) following the World Cup™ tournament, the Play Our Way program will provide opportunities for clubs across the country to improve their facilities and





create better quality environments for women and girls to become and stay involved in football.

Outside of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, Football Australia continued its longstanding commitment to take football content around the country, working with various state governments to place a range of different football events including:

- the Cup of Nations and National Youth Championships played in New South Wales
- the National Futsal Championships played in Queensland
- the CommBank Matildas send-off match against France
- Western Australia's hosting of the CommBank Matildas AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers
- the IFCPF Asian Oceania Championship which took place in Victoria
- the Subway Socceroos FIFA World Cup™ Qualifier against Bangladesh.

A long-term project in partnership with the Victoria State Government, the Home of the Matildas was opened on 4 July, with Victoria Sports Minister Steve Dimopoulos joining members of the CommBank Matildas to celebrate the occasion.

“THE FACILITY, PART OF A \$101-MILLION INVESTMENT IN THE LA TROBE UNIVERSITY SPORTS PARK, BOASTS FOUR PITCHES, CHANGE ROOMS, GYM, MEDICAL AND RECOVERY FACILITIES, AS WELL AS FUNCTION AND EDUCATIONAL SPACES.”

It will function as Victoria's State Football Centre and provide opportunities to National Teams such as the CommBank Matildas, and to grassroots teams across the state.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Football Australia's International Relations Department delivered a number of projects, highlighting the game's unique capacity to connect beyond borders and cultures in 2023.

In addition to day-to-day management of Football Australia's contact with international football stakeholders, the department continued its longstanding partnership with the Australian Government and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on a wide range of initiatives supporting the development of football in the Asia-Pacific, while simultaneously delivering value into the Australian game.

"THIS INCLUDED PILOTING A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND, SEVEN-NATION INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT TOUR OF ASIA, WITH THE DIPLOMATIC VALUE OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL TAKING CENTRE STAGE IN THE KEY REGIONS OF INDIA AND ASEAN DURING THE COUNTDOWN TO THE FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP™."

Starting in Mumbai and concluding in Jakarta, the tour featured a range of current and former female Australian National Team players and technical experts, who shared knowledge, experience and inspiration with 280 players, 180 coaches and 45 referees.

The program included a clinic in Hanoi for the UN International School team, featuring the prime ministers of Australia and Vietnam, the CommBank Young Matildas and the Vietnam women's national team on the occasion of the 50-year anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

In addition to those on-field activities, the tour served as a platform for discussions with seven AFC Member Associations, as well as the Asian Football Confederation and ASEAN Football Federation, with a focus on future partnerships.

The tour of India and ASEAN followed a March project in Beijing and Shanghai, where a delegation, including former CommBank Matilda, Grace Gill, made Football Australia the first FIFA Women's World Cup™ Host Member Association to directly engage in the tournament's global Trophy Tour, while also



国际足联女足世界杯奖杯巡展

Going Beyond



making Football Australia the first Member Association in world football to visit mainland China since the country's reopening since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Former Matildas Alicia Ferguson and Alison Forman participated in further activities at Trophy Tour stops in England, Spain, Portugal and Denmark, while Football Australia coordinated the sale of merchandise to over 20 Australia diplomatic posts in a project that reached each of FIFA's six confederations.

There was also involvement by members of the CommBank Young Matildas and CommBank ParaMatildas in July's Gender Equality Symposium, a key DFAT initiative around the FIFA Women's World Cup™, and a highly successful Canberra-based sports diplomacy event, attended by the assistant foreign minister and the ambassadors of the tournament's participating teams.

“SUPPORTING FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AFC REMAINS A KEY PRIORITY FOR DFAT.”

A week-long inspection tour was designed and run by the department as part of Australia's ongoing bid to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026™ in early April, while the AFC Women's Football Committee convened in Sydney on the afternoon of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ Final, and hosting rights were secured for October's AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers.

Football Australia's collaboration with PacificAus Sports also secured funding for the return of international futsal in July, with Solomon Islands travelling to Sydney for a three-match series, allowing the Futsalroos to play their first matches on home soil since 2019.

COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The year 2023 has truly been a defining period for football in Australia, and the commercial support for the game is in good health. This year saw records achieved in crowd attendance, broadcast viewership and merchandise sales, and an expansion of Football Australia's reach into new areas, which delivered new audiences and increased commercial returns.

Football Australia's commercial partner program continued its strong growth in 2023. After announcing a major partnership with LEGO Australia in late 2022, this partnership brought to fruition a number of key initiatives encouraging girls to play and is directly aligned with Football Australia's *Legacy '23* initiatives and Our Game platform.

Australia's national carrier Qantas renewed its partnership, which sees the airline continue as the Official Airline of the Australia Cup and the Subway Socceroos and CommBank Matildas for the next three years.

"THIS PARTNERSHIP EXTENSION MARKED A MAJOR MILESTONE IN A SERIES OF SIGNIFICANT SPONSORSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS BY FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS, AND IT DEMONSTRATED THE STRONG SUPPORT THAT FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA CONTINUES TO RECEIVE FROM SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST ICONIC BRANDS."

In addition to renewing its partnership with Qantas, Football Australia also entered into partnerships with two of Australia's best homegrown fashion labels, M.J. Bale Australia and BEARE PARK, to supply formal wear, ensuring the organisation was looking its best ahead of the FIFA Men's and Women's World Cups.

In a further sign of the cross-cultural appeal of football, Football Australia also partnered with international superstar and award-winning songwriter Tones And I in a historic collaboration that united the worlds of music and sport. The collaboration saw Tones and I's aptly named single





'The Greatest' used across Football Australia's and Network 10's promotional assets in the lead-up to the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™.

Importantly, both Football Australia's new and existing partners heavily leveraged their investments in 2023, providing more television and out-of-home advertising and associated marketing campaigns, promoting football to Australians more than ever before.

Nike, CUPRA, Subway, CommBank, Rebel Sport, LEGO, Qantas, Cadbury, and Priceline all conducted significant and dedicated marketing campaigns in 2022 and 2023, with this increased visibility expanding the game's reach well beyond Football Australia's direct marketing channels.

Football Australia's media rights strategy also saw great growth.

Paramount ANZ continues its deep commitment as the 'Home of Australian Football', and in 2022 and 2023, provided widespread exposure for the sport across its free-to-air live broadcast coverage of the CommBank Matildas, Subway Socceroos and Australia Cup, as well as giving prominence to Football Australia content across Network 10's news and entertainment programming.

During the official broadcast of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, the CommBank Matildas Semi-Final against England saw Network Seven attract the highest broadcast audience ever recorded in Australia since OzTAM rankings commenced, with an average audience of 7,130,000 Australians – emphasising the truly culture-shifting impact of the CommBank Matildas' performances.

Another major project to launch in 2023 was the historic six-episode docuseries, **Matildas: The World at Our Feet**, launched globally on Disney+ to high demand. The docuseries provides intimate, behind-the-scenes access to the CommBank Matildas on and off the pitch, and represented a pioneering step into non-traditional sports broadcasting, drawing many new fans into the sport.

Principle XI of the **XI Principles** focuses on transforming our National Teams into uniquely iconic brands.

A key driver for this has been the expansion of Football Australia's licensing and merchandise program.

“THIS PROGRAM HAS SEEN THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL LICENSEES DOUBLE, AND THE RESULT IS OVER 220 DIFFERENT OFFICIALLY LICENSED PRODUCTS, WHICH ENABLES SUBWAY SOCCEROOS AND COMMBANK MATILDAS FANS TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR THEIR TEAMS IN MORE WAYS THAN EVER BEFORE.”

The year 2023 saw sales for the CommBank Matildas' official Nike jersey outsell previous numbers by a factor of 13:1¹, and sales across official partner Rebel Sport's retail network led to the CommBank Matildas being described as Rebel Sport's 'best supported team in all sports, ever.'²

Beyond the sales of traditional sports fan items, Football Australia expanded into areas such as jewellery, school wear, children's books, collector coins, and drinks, and saw licensing agreements entered into with companies such as Smiggle, frank green, CASETiFY, Colette, Penguin Random House, Australia Post and the Royal Australian Mint – broadly extending the retail reach of the CommBank Matildas and Subway Socceroos brands.

[1] Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/aug/15/how-to-buy-matildas-merchandise-jerseys-selling-out-nike-demand-australia-diy-make-your-own-vs-england-2023-womens-world-cup>

[2] Source: <https://www.ragtrader.com.au/news/i-thought-it-was-a-typo-rebel-md-gary-williams-big-play-pays-off>



FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023™



FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 2023™

FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA CO-HOSTED THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP™ EVER

From 20 July to 20 August 2023, Australia co-hosted with New Zealand the biggest and most successful edition of FIFA Women's World Cup™ to date.

After an extraordinary, record-breaking month of football across the two countries, 10 stadiums and nine welcoming host cities, a new FIFA Women's World Cup™ winner was crowned at Stadium Australia (Sydney) on 20 August, with Spain defeating England 1–0 in front of over 75,000 spectators – the fifth time the iconic stadium reached maximum capacity during the tournament – which saw a fitting closure to a scintillating tournament.

FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, hailed the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ transformational, as US\$570 million in revenue was generated, allowing the tournament to break even for the first time.

“THIS ITERATION MARKED THE FIRST TIME 32 COUNTRIES TOOK PART IN A FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP™, WITH PREVIOUS EDITIONS ONLY FEATURING 24 TEAMS. SIX DIFFERENT CONFEDERATIONS WERE REPRESENTED.”

James Johnson, Football Australia CEO, remarked at the time, 'Australia's passion for football has never been clearer. The record attendances, viewership numbers, and the extraordinary atmosphere throughout this tournament, showcase how deeply our nation loves this game.'

'We understood the transformational power of the tournament and have worked tirelessly since we were granted hosting rights, to use this moment to springboard Australian football into a new future, with women's football leading the way for the game.'



'By every measure, the tournament has been a resounding success and the biggest and best ever edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup™. On behalf of Australian football, we would like to thank FIFA, our co-host, Football New Zealand, the participating nations and the thousands of volunteers across the country who contributed to the success the tournament.

'We would like to thank Sam Kerr and the CommBank Matildas playing squad, Tony Gustavsson and his coaching staff and all other backroom staff, for producing our best ever result at a FIFA Women's World Cup™. Fourth in the world is a phenomenal achievement and we are extremely proud of the team.

'The Australian sporting landscape will never be the same; because the CommBank Matildas have changed things forever,' concluded Johnson.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TOURNAMENT

A new champion emerged, with Spain joining the elite group of FIFA Women's World Cup™ winners.

Australia's own CommBank Matildas did the nation proud. Their journey through the tournament captivated the nation, with matches rating an average of 3.44 million viewers per match. The aggregate viewership for their seven fixtures stands at a staggering 24.08 million.

- AUS vs ENG: 7.13 million
- AUS vs FRA: 4.17 million
- AUS vs DEN: 3.56 million
- AUS vs SWE: 3.38 million
- AUS vs CAN: 2.42 million
- AUS vs IRE: 1.93 million
- AUS vs NIG: 1.49 million

Australia is only the second team to host a FIFA Women's World Cup™ and finish in the top four after the USA (winners in 1999, third place in 2003).

An astonishing 164 goals were scored, surpassing all previous records.

The tournament saw a spike in fan engagement, with almost two million fans attending matches – 500,000 more than initial targets and projections. There were 747,000 visitors to FIFA Fan Festivals. Stadiums were full at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, with stadium occupancy at more than 84% across Australia and New Zealand.

Australia's seven matches during the tournament attracted 403,136 fans, with an average of 57,591 for each match, accounting for 99.92% of capacity at each venue.

In broadcast, Australia's Semi-Final match against England broke records, with 7.13 million viewers and a national reach of 11.15 million on Seven's platforms, marking the most watched television program since 2001.

"SEVEN'S COVERAGE OF THE FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023™ REACHED 18.6 MILLION VIEWERS, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 3.82 MILLION ON 7PLUS. SUNDAY'S FINAL BETWEEN SPAIN AND ENGLAND REACHED 5.54 MILLION VIEWERS AND AVERAGED 3.08 MILLION."

Optus Sport, the tournament's host broadcaster, reported social media views of FIFA Women's World Cup™ content at over 75 million. Average viewing time of content by each Optus Sport subscriber was over 21 hours and page views of content articles reached 5.5 million in the last five weeks.

On the digital frontier, FIFA's platforms witnessed a 130% increase in visitors compared to the 2019 edition, with over three billion content views.





CommBank Matildas' digital platforms saw record reach and engagement also:

- Social media impressions over 320 million.
- Social media video views over 112 million.
- Over 1.8 million people visited www.matildas.com.au in last six weeks.
- During a period of six weeks, the Football Australia online store saw merchandise sales numbers that compared to sales achieved throughout the whole of Financial Year 2022–2023.
- Cumulatively, from the squad announcement at the beginning of July, CommBank Matildas social channels grew by 133%, from 590,868 followers across all social platforms to 1.38 million (across Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok).
- The CommBank Matildas' Instagram page grew by 344%, representing an increase of 490,000 followers during the campaign and over 100,000 followers gained on Instagram on the night the Matildas qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup™ Semi-Final.
- The CommBank Matildas' TikTok channel was the biggest platform for video views.

Football Australia's Media Department oversaw the delivery of a comprehensive media and publicity plan, which delivered A\$2.78-billion worth of media coverage within Australia, with a potential global reach of 301 billion viewers. (Measurements calculated by Meltwater for the period 12 July to 12 September 2023.)

The 'Til Its Done brand and marketing campaign achieved outstanding brand health results which included:

- Matildas National Team Favouritism ranked 1st in Australia
- NPS score at a record high of 28%
- Prompted awareness at a high of 69%
- Matildas ranked as the number 1 favourite football product/team

In other memorable milestones, Morocco defender Nouhaila Benzina created a slice of FIFA Women's World Cup™ history during the tournament, when she became the first senior-level player ever to wear a hijab during a game at the FIFA Women's World Cup™. Korea Republic's Casey Phair (aged 16 years, 26 days) became the youngest player in FIFA Women's World Cup™ history to make an appearance at this tournament.

Football Australia CEO James Johnson added, 'Beyond the impressive numbers, what stands out is the spirit of unity, inclusion and celebration. It's a testament to the power of sport, especially football, in bringing people together.'

“THIS FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP™ HAS NOT ONLY BEEN ABOUT SHOWCASING TOP-TIER FOOTBALL, BUT ALSO ABOUT GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY, AS HIGHLIGHTED BY FIFA'S COMMITMENT TO PLANT 30,000 TREES IN EACH HOST CITY.”

Football Australia extends congratulations to Spain, the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ Champions, and its gratitude to all the fans, teams and partners who made this event historic. As the world celebrates the crowning of the new champion, the legacy of this tournament will live on for years to come.



NATIONAL TEAMS



COMMBANK MATILDAS

The CommBank Matildas enjoyed a remarkable, transformative, history-making and record-breaking 12 months on and off the pitch.

On the pitch, the CommBank Matildas recorded the best ever finish for an Australian team at a FIFA World Cup™ Finals, with fourth place in the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™. In turn, their performance united a nation, with a history-making 11.15 million Australians tuning in during the 90 minutes of the Australia versus England Semi-Final – more than 43% of the Australian population.

“AUSTRALIA'S HIGH-OCTANE, ATTACKING FOOTBALL STYLE ALSO RESULTED IN VICTORIES OVER SEVERAL TOP 10 NATIONS, INCLUDING SPAIN, ENGLAND, SWEDEN, FRANCE AND CANADA OVER THE SAME TIME PERIOD.”

Off the pitch, the ever increasing strong appeal of the CommBank Matildas saw them pack out stadiums from the west coast to the east coast of Australia. Over 600,000 people have attended CommBank Matildas matches in the past 12 months with 11 consecutive home matches being sold out, setting the record for the biggest women's sporting event crowd outside of a World Cup™ or an Olympic Games.

The year 2023 also saw the CommBank Matildas take a giant step on the path to Paris 2024™ when the team qualified for the final round of the AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers.

OCTOBER 2022: SOUTH AFRICA AND DENMARK INTERNATIONALS

The CommBank Matildas headed to London in October 2022 to take on their fellow FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ participants and African Cup of Nations champions, South Africa.

At the home of English Women's Super League champions, Chelsea, the Matildas were in cruise control throughout the encounter. It was a banner performance for Cortnee Vine with the forward recording her first international goals for Australia. Clare Polkinghorne and Caitlin Foord rounded out a 4-1 win.





The CommBank Matildas then jetted off to Viborg, Denmark, to meet another FIFA World Cup™ participant in Denmark. While the Danes took an early lead, a character-building second half saw Australia notch up back-to-back wins, with a Foord brace and Gorry shooting a long-range stunner to take out the contest 3–1.

NOVEMBER 2022: SWEDEN AND THAILAND INTERNATIONALS

Returning home in November, the CommBank Matildas' run of good form continued in Melbourne.

Taking on the Olympic Silver Medallists and then world number three ranked nation Sweden at AAMI Park, Caitlin Foord continued her scintillating form with two goals. She was supported by captain Sam Kerr and Mary Fowler as Australia inflicted a heavy 4–0 defeat of Blågult.

“ON A THREE-MATCH WINNING STREAK, THE COMMBANK MATILDAS WENT ON TO FINISH THEIR 2023 ON A HIGH IN GOSFORD. WITH KERR AND PACY WINGER HAYLEY RASO ON THE SCORESHEET, TONY GUSTAVSSON AND HIS TEAM ENDED THE YEAR ON A FOUR-MATCH WINNING STREAK.”

FEBRUARY 2023: CUP OF NATIONS

The new year saw heightened football fever with the anticipation of a FIFA Women's World Cup™ on home soil, just around the corner.

February heralded the long-awaited return of the Cup of Nations with the CommBank Matildas to meet World Cup™ participants

Spain and Jamaica, with Czechia rounding out the four nations tournament.

Australia opened the tournament with a solid 4–0 result over a steadfast Czechia. It took a 48th-minute goal from Raso to break the deadlock, but once they did, Kerr and Polkinghorne made their own scoreboard contributions, while Raso added a second.

Match Day Two saw the powerhouse match up of Australia and Spain at CommBank Stadium. On a night when the CommBank Matildas became the first National Team to wear pride numbers in support of the LGBTQIA+ community, Australia extended its winning streak to six with a 3–2 win over Spain. A blistering Vine strike opened the scoring before Polkinghorne and Foord settled the game.

With the retention of the Cup of Nations on the line, Australia put in a clinical performance against Jamaica to clinch a 3–0 result. The irresistible Caitlin Foord again found the back of the net as did Katrina Gorry and Alex Chidiac, as Australia notched up its seventh win in a row and instilled a sense of belief from the nation.

APRIL 2023: SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND INTERNATIONALS

The April FIFA Women's Window saw the CommBank Matildas come in under a cloud, with six regular starters unavailable through injury.

Despite controlling most of the proceedings and creating a majority of the chances, a wonder strike saw the CommBank Matildas defeated by Scotland 1–0 in London.

However, Australia would bounce back in superb style just days later against European Champions, England. On a rainy night in Brentford, the CommBank Matildas ended the Lionesses' 30-game unbeaten streak, with goals from Kerr, and a maiden international goal from Charli Grant.



JULY/AUGUST 2023: FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 2023™ CAMPAIGN

After finishing fourth at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and entering the FIFA Women's World Cup™ in good form, the CommBank Matildas were looking to make their impact felt on and off the field.

What followed over the month of football was an extraordinary run that set records. The CommBank Matildas would finish top of their group for the first time, scoring their highest number of group stage goals and claiming their highest number of points in total.

On 14 July 2023, Victorian fans gave the CommBank Matildas a rousing send-off ahead of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, with 50,629 fans filling Marvel Stadium as Australia outclassed France 1–0 with a Mary Fowler goal.

Unfortunately, on the eve of the opening match, the CommBank Matildas suffered a blow with captain Sam Kerr sustaining a calf injury that would rule her out of the opening two group stage matches.

Defender Steph Catley stepped up to take on the captain's armband and in a sold-out Stadium Australia in Sydney/Wangal, Catley stepped up to the plate in the big moment. With 75,784 fans watching on, the Melbournian buried a 52nd-minute penalty to give Australia the lead and the win over the Republic of Ireland.

Brisbane/Meanjin was next on the agenda. Brisbane Stadium was filled to capacity with 49,156 fans witnessing the CommBank Matildas take on African powerhouse, Nigeria (Super Falcons). In a gripping contest it was the Super Falcons who claimed the three points as they eclipsed Australia 3–2, despite goals from Emily van Egmond and Alanna Kennedy.

Facing a 'must win' encounter against the reigning Olympic Gold Medallists, Canada, the CommBank Matildas met the challenge in Melbourne/Naarm. A Hayley Raso brace and goal contributions from Mary Fowler and Steph Catley, swept away the Canadians for a pulsating 4–0 win and advancement to the knockout stages.

Next up would be Denmark in a Round of 16 clash that saw the CommBank Matildas head back to Sydney/Wangal. In a mature and controlled performance, Caitlin Foord and Hayley Raso steered Australia past the Danes, with Australia's only second knockout phase win at a senior World Cup.

In one of the matches of the tournament, the CommBank Matildas would meet France in front of a raucous crowd in Brisbane/Meanjin. After a tense 0–0 draw at the end of full time and extra time, the Quarter-Final would be settled from the penalty spot. What followed would be extraordinary, edge-of-your-seat, high drama.

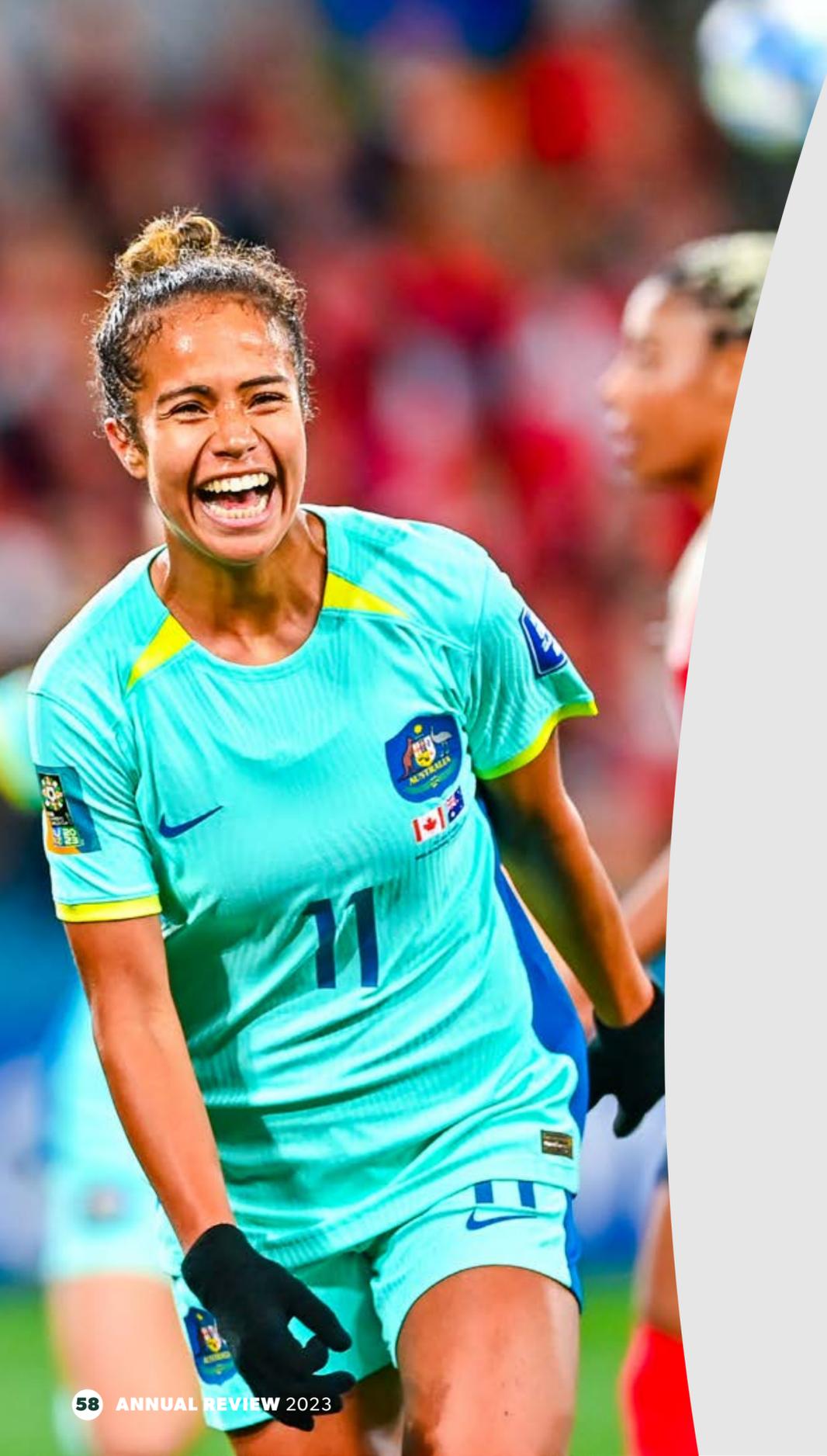
“IN THE LONGEST PENALTY SHOOTOUT IN WORLD CUP™ HISTORY – WOMEN'S OR MEN'S – GOALKEEPER MACKENZIE ARNOLD EARNED CULT-HERO STATUS AS SHE MADE THREE CRUCIAL SAVES IN THE SHOOTOUT BEFORE CORTNEE VINE FIRED AUSTRALIA TO THEIR FIRST EVER WORLD CUP™ SEMI-FINAL.”

Stadium Australia would once again welcome the CommBank Matildas, this time with the team in uncharted territory. Another capacity crowd of 75,784 people were on hand as Australia faced England in a true clash of rivals. This time it was England who would come out on top 3–1, but the true moment of magic was created when, from 36 metres out, Sam Kerr fired home one of the goals of the tournament.

Battling it out for bronze, Australia and Sweden met for the second time in less than 12 months. Again, it was Sweden who would reverse the result of the last meeting with a 2–0 win in Brisbane/Meanjin.

It was the end of a stellar campaign from the CommBank Matildas, with Australia's eventual fourth place the best finish of an Australian team and the second-best result of a host nation in FIFA Women's World Cup™ history.





COMMBANK MATILDAS SQUAD – FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND 2023™

1. Lydia WILLIAMS, 2. Courtney NEVIN, 3. Aivi LUIK, 4. Clare POLKINGHORNE, 5. Cortnee VINE, 6. Clare WHEELER, 7. Steph CATLEY, 8. Alex CHIDIAC, 9. Caitlin FOORD, 10. Emily VAN EGMOND, 11. Mary FOWLER, 12. Teagan MICAHA, 13. Tameka YALLOP, 14. Alanna KENNEDY, 15. Clare HUNT, 16. Hayley RASO, 17. Kyah SIMON, 18. Mackenzie ARNOLD, 19. Katrina GORRY, 20. Sam KERR, 21. Ellie CARPENTER, 22. Charlotte GRANT, 23. Kyra COONEY-CROSS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2023: AFC WOMEN'S OLYMPIC QUALIFIERS ROUND 2

Looking to continue the momentum from the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™, Australia headed to Perth for the AFC Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024™ Asian Qualifiers Round 2.

Hosting Group A, Australia would meet IR Iran, the Philippines and Chinese Taipei, with the group winner guaranteed a place in Round 3.

HBF Park hosted the first match, the CommBank Matildas against IR Iran. Following a resolute defensive performance from the visitors, it took a little time for Australia to crack open their defence. The opening came from an unexpected source with defender Ellie Carpenter scoring in the 19th minute. Iran continued to compete in the second half before hometown hero Sam Kerr scored her first international goal in Perth, to close it out 2–0.

Match Day Two was a true celebratory match with 59,155 fans packing out Optus Stadium – a record women's sporting event crowd, aside from FIFA World Cups™ and the Olympics – as Australia turned on the style in an exhilarating 8–0 win over the Philippines. Kerr and Foord headlined the action with hat-tricks from the duo, while Fowler opened the scoring, and Wheeler sealed the victory as she ripped her first international goal.

Although qualification was all but secured, the final match would still have a bearing on Round 3, but Chinese Taipei made their presence felt with a tenacious execution of their game plan.

It took a piece of magic to finally find a way through, with Fowler striking from a distance to break down the Chinese Taipei resistance. Kerr and Yallop added to the scoreboard to see Australia run out 3–0 winners and advance to meet Uzbekistan in the final round in 2024.



SUBWAY SOCCEROOS

In December 2022, the Subway Socceroos captured the imagination of the nation, with their extraordinary performances at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Finals going down as the most successful in history.

During the group stage of the Finals, the Subway Socceroos claimed two victories for the first time at a FIFA World Cup™ by defeating both Tunisia and Denmark, and were magnificent against a giant of world football and eventual World Cup winners Argentina, going down 2–1 in the Round of 16.

The win against Tunisia was the first at the tournament for Australia in 12 years and the 1–0 scoreline was the Subway Socceroos' first clean sheet at the FIFA World Cup™ in 48 years. The Australians then kept world-ranked number 10, Denmark, scoreless in their final group stage game, to qualify for the Round of 16, being the first time an Australian team had beaten a top ten-ranked nation at a FIFA World Cup™.

“OVER THE COURSE OF THE GROUP STAGE, 19 PLAYERS FEATURED IN GAMES, WITH 14 MAKING THEIR FIFA WORLD CUP™ DEBUTS.”

After playing all four matches in Doha, captain Mathew Ryan, and Mathew Leckie, now hold the record for the most FIFA World Cup™ appearances for an Australian footballer, with 10 appearances respectively, surpassing both Mark Bresciano and Tim Cahill.

Reflecting upon the Subway Socceroos' campaign, Football Australia Chair, Chris Nikou, said at the time: 'This Socceroos squad led by Graham Arnold has represented Australia and Australian football impeccably in Qatar, delivering the best result for our National Team in FIFA World Cup™ history.

'The journey to qualifying for this year's FIFA World Cup™ was a challenging one for the Socceroos, but on the biggest stage in world football, the Subway Socceroos demonstrated the globally recognised Aussie fighting spirit and determination to match it with the best and make an entire nation incredibly proud.

'Australia is a football nation and the way in which this Socceroos squad has conducted themselves both on and off the pitch will attract new people to the world game in Australia and inspire future generations of Socceroos,' Nikou concluded.





Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Subway Socceroos qualified for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ having played just four of 20 qualifying matches on Australian shores, with players and staff making significant personal sacrifices – which included multiple weeks in quarantine and abiding by strict COVID-19 protocols – to help Australia qualify for Qatar.

“ACROSS THE QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN, 68 PLAYERS WERE NAMED IN SOCCEROOS SQUADS, WITH 32 MAKING THEIR DEBUT FOR THE SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM.”

The final 26-man squad for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ featured 10 members of the Tokyo 2020 Olyroos squad: Nathaniel Atkinson, Keanu Baccus, Thomas Deng, Cameron Devlin, Joel King, Riley McGree, Kye Rowles, Harry Souttar, Marco Tilio, and Mitchell Duke as the over-age player.

MARCH – HOMECOMING SERIES

Following their history-making feats at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, the Subway Socceroos returned to Australia in March for a two-match ‘Homecoming Series’ against Ecuador – world-ranked number 46 – at CommBank Stadium in Sydney on Friday 24 March and Marvel Stadium in Melbourne on Tuesday 28 March.

Due to injury, Martin Boyle, Ajdin Hrustic, Jamie Maclaren and Mathew Leckie were unavailable for this two-match series, while goalkeeper Danny Vukovic announced his retirement from international football following the FIFA World Cup™.

Their absence presented an opportunity for others to be recalled, including midfielder Connor Metcalfe and Brandon Borrello, with Head Coach Graham Arnold naming four uncapped players in the 26-player squad: defender Jordan Bos, midfielder Aiden O’Neill, goalkeeper Joe Gauci, and midfielder Alexander Robertson.

In the opening match of the series, Garang Kuol scored his maiden international goal, while Jackson Irvine and Awer Mabil were also on target.

Graham Arnold handed Aiden O’Neill his international debut with the 24-year-old becoming cap #629, while Alexander Robertson also made his highly anticipated Australia debut – becoming cap #630 – and created history in the process, becoming the first third-generation Socceroo following his grandfather (Alex Snr) and father (Mark).

Arnold always intended to provide opportunities to the extended squad during the second match, with goalkeeper Joe Gauci (cap #631) making his senior National Team debut, which saw Irvine taking the armband in his hometown and in doing so, he became the 63rd captain in Socceroos history.

Defender Jordan Bos also came off the bench to make his Socceroos debut, becoming cap #632 in the process.

The match also saw Borrello’s inaugural international goal; however, this was cancelled out in the second half after a penalty from Pervis Estupiñán and a William Pacho header, which guided Ecuador to a tight 2–1 victory.

JUNE – VERSUS ARGENTINA IN CHINA

After meeting in the Round of 16 at the FIFA World Cup™ in Qatar, the Subway Socceroos were invited to play World Champions, Argentina, in China during the June window, reflecting the growing appeal of Australia’s senior National Team among the top-ranked nations.

Played at the Workers’ Stadium in Beijing on 15 June, the world-ranked number 1 claimed a 2–0 victory courtesy of a Lionel Messi stunner and substitute German Pezzella’s header midway through the second half.

Jordan Bos received his maiden Subway Socceroos start and was one of four changes from the 11 that lined up against Argentina in Doha.



Meanwhile, Lionel Scaloni named a strong starting line-up headlined by Messi, Alexis Mac Allister, Angel Di Maria and Enzo Fernandez. Indeed, Nicolas Gonzalez and Di Maria were the two inclusions that did not start in the Argentine side that edged past Australia at the FIFA World Cup™.

SEPTEMBER – VERSUS MEXICO IN DALLAS

In a further sign of the Subway Socceroos appeal on the global stage, the Australians were invited to play Mexico in Dallas during the September window.

It was an excellent opportunity for Australia to play at a FIFA World Cup™ venue and to use the experience to plan and prepare should the Subway Socceroos qualify for 2026.

Played at the home of the Dallas Cowboys – AT&T Stadium – on 10 September, the Subway Socceroos played out a 2–2 in a hostile, pro-Mexican atmosphere.

Goals to Harry Souttar and Martin Boyle had Graham Arnold's team 2–0 up before a couple of key defensive lapses allowed their 12th-ranked opposition back into the game.

Cameron Burgess (#633) and Sam Silvera (#634) received their maiden caps for the green and gold.

OCTOBER – LONDON WINDOW

On Friday 13 October, the Subway Socceroos created history when they became the first Australian team to play at the famous Wembley Stadium when they faced England in front of 81,116 football fans.

The Subway Socceroos took it to the world-ranked number 4, creating numerous opportunities and outplaying the home team for the best part of an hour before England's Ollie Watkins scored what would be the only goal of the match in the 57th minute.

Prior to the goal, the Subway Socceroos had the better chances and were the better team, with their fearless approach silencing the sold-out crowd.

Keanu Baccus had a curling shot on goal tipped wide by Sam Johnstone. Then, 10 minutes later, an effort from Mitchell Duke went just past the post and at a corner kick not long after that, Kyle Rowles had a lash from close range.

The Subway Socceroos kept coming and just before half-time, a brilliant ball from Baccus put Martin Boyle through and his lay-off for Ryan Strain was only just kept out by a diving Lewis Dunk.

“THE AUSTRALIANS PICKED UP RIGHT WHERE THEY LEFT OFF IN THE SECOND HALF; HOWEVER, THE WATKINS’ GOAL FROM A DEFENSIVE ERROR AT THE BACK WAS A SUCKER PUNCH FOR THE GREEN AND GOLD, WHO WOULD NEVER STOP, AND CAME CLOSE TO AN EQUALISER WHEN CONNOR METCALFE HIT THE POST FROM A CORNER KICK IN THE 80TH MINUTE.”

Head Coach Graham Arnold turned to the bench in the final half-hour looking for an equaliser, including senior men's debuts for Lewis Miller (cap #635) and Mohamed Toure (cap #636).

Four days later on Tuesday 17 October, the Subway Socceroos would meet their trans-Tasman rivals, New Zealand, at Gtech Community Stadium, the home of Premiership side, Brentford FC.

The match would also be the first time the two nations would place for the rediscovered ANZAC Soccer Ashes trophy.

The Soccer Ashes trophy – a unique artefact of both nations' shared sporting and military history – was crafted in 1923 and for 30 years served as the prize for international 'tests' between Australia and New Zealand.





The trophy is a powerful symbol of Australian and New Zealand men's national teams' early years, containing the ashes of cigars smoked by the team's first captains, Alex Gibb and George Campbell, housed in a safety razor case that was carried at Gallipoli.

Upon rediscovering the trophy in April 2023, Football Australia and New Zealand Football discussed the possibility of reinstating the Soccer Ashes trophy as the fixture's perpetual prize, which had been the case until the mid-1950s.

“THE SUBWAY SOCCEROOS DOMINATED PROCEEDINGS THROUGHOUT AND WENT AHEAD IN THE 13TH MINUTE AFTER MAKING THE MOST OF A WELL-PLACED CROSS FROM LEWIS MILLER.”

Miller's far-post ball was nodded back into the heart of New Zealand's penalty area by impressive debutant Alessandro Circati (cap #637), where Mitchell Duke was first to the ball, with his powerful shot earning him his 10th goal in 30 appearances for the National Team.

After coming on in the second half for Massimo Luongo – who made his first Socceroos appearance since 2019 – Jackson Irvine sealed the win in the 76th minute when he headed home a corner from Martin Boyle.

Across the 90 minutes, the Subway Socceroos could have extended their lead at several points; however, they were somewhat wasteful in front of goal.

The Australians won 2–0 on the night and claimed the Soccer Ashes trophy, a prized possession they will retain until the two senior men's national teams meet again.



AUSTRALIA U23 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

With a heavy international calendar for the CommBank Matildas, CommBank Junior Matildas and CommBank Young Matildas, the Australia U23 Women's National Team's first activity came in May 2023, with a domestic training camp in Brisbane.

"SEPTEMBER SAW HEAD COACH MELISSA ANDREATTA BRING THE TEAM TOGETHER FOR A TRAINING CAMP AND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY WITH SCOTLAND IN VARESE, ITALY."

Played at the Australian Institute of Sport's European Training Centre, the U23s defeated Scotland 1-0, with Polly Doran the match winner scoring.



COMMBANK YOUNG MATILDAS (U20 WNT)

Following the completion of their FIFA U20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022™ campaign, the wheel turned and a new cycle of U20 players began their path to the 2024 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup™.

Head Coach Leah Blayney returned for another cycle with the CommBank Young Matildas, with preparations commencing, including a mixture of training camps, Elite Matches and invaluable international matches.

During this period, the CommBank Young Matildas sailed through the first hurdle, qualification for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2024™.

NOVEMBER 2022: PACIFIC WOMEN'S FOUR NATIONS TOURNAMENT

After an initial training camp, the new cycle of CommBank Young Matildas had their first international outing in the Pacific Women's Four Nations Tournament. Hosted in Canberra, the tournament saw the U20 side take on the senior national teams of Fiji and Solomon Islands.

"THE OPENING MATCH AGAINST FIJI AT THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT ENDED IN A 2-1 VICTORY FOR THE AUSSIES, WITH AVAANI PRAKASH AND ELLA O'GRADY ON THE SCOREBOARD FOR THE HOME TEAM."

Match Day Two saw the Aussies put in a more controlled performance, with Jonti Fisher, Sienna Saveska and Josie Allan each scoring to seal a 3-0 victory over Solomon Islands.

MARCH 2023: AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP INDONESIA 2024™ QUALIFIERS – ROUND 1

Group C, and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, awaited the CommBank Young Matildas in Round 1, with Blayney and her team to meet Guam and Kyrgyzstan.





“A GOAL-FEST STARTED THE CAMPAIGN, WITH AUSTRALIA RECORDING AN 11-0 WIN OVER GUAM. TEN DIFFERENT PLAYERS WERE ON THE SCOREBOARD FOR THE AUSSIES, WITH SHAY HOLLMAN, EMILIA MURRAY AND CLAUDIA CICCIO ALL NETTING BRACES.”

Match Day Two saw similar dominance from the visitors as the hosts, Kyrgyzstan, were defeated 7–0. Midfielder Alana Murphy led the way with a brace as Blayney’s side once again shared the scoring load with six different goalscorers.

JUNE 2023: AFC U20 WOMEN’S ASIAN CUP INDONESIA 2024™ QUALIFIERS – ROUND 2

Lebanon, IR Iran and host Vietnam stood between Australia and qualification for the AFC U20 Women’s Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2024™.

Starting on the front foot, Australia opened its Group A campaign with a 5–0 result against Lebanon, thanks to Kahli Johnson, Gemma Ferris, Indiana Dos Santos, Sienna Saveska and Claudia Cicco.

With three points already on the board, the CommBank Young Matildas faced a tougher challenge from IR Iran in Game 2, but with a Johnson brace and a Maya Lobo goal, they eventually overcame a disciplined IR Iran 3–0.

Alana Murphy ensured Australia had a perfect qualification record when she notched up a brace in the final match against Vietnam. The 2–0 win saw the CommBank Young Matildas headed for Tashkent next March 2024.



COMM BANK JUNIOR MATILDAS (U17 WNT)

A new cohort of CommBank Junior Matildas arrived on the international scene at the end of 2022, as Head Coach Rae Dower commenced a new international cycle for the U17 Women's National Team.

A calendar of international friendlies and training camps saw Dower extensively tour Australia with over 70 promising footballers who had been called up over the past 12 months. The result was the qualification of the CommBank Junior Matildas for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024™ and the discovery of some quality young footballers.

OCT/NOVEMBER 2022: KOREA REPUBLIC SERIES

The CommBank Junior Matildas commenced their new cycle with a three-match international friendly series with AFC compatriots Korea Republic, on the Gold Coast.

“IT WAS A SLOW START FOR THE AUSSIES, WITH THE VISITORS CLAIMING VICTORY IN THE OPENING MATCH 3-1. THE BRIGHT SPOT FOR THE U17S WAS QUEENSLAND LOCAL GRACE KUILAMU NETTING HER FIRST INTERNATIONAL GOAL.”

Match Two saw a tighter contest, with Australia recording a 1-1 draw with Korea Republic thanks to a goal from the emerging talent Indiana Dos Santos. The final match saw the visitors claim victory 1-0 and the series 2-0; however, for Australia it was a promising first series against one of the AFC's powerhouses.

APRIL 2023: AFC U17 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP INDONESIA 2024™ QUALIFIERS – ROUND 1

A trip to Mongolia was on the cards when Australia was drawn in Group B of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024™ qualification – Round 1 Qualifiers.





With a group-topping finish required for the CommBank Junior Matildas to progress to Round 2, they were clinical in their matches. An opening match 11–0 win over Mongolia set the tone, with Tiana Fuller leading the way with four goals. The Aussies sealed their progression to Round 2, with a confident 3–0 win over Chinese Taipei thanks to goals from Ischia Brooking, Shayla Williams and Sienna Dale.

JUNE 2023: KOREA REPUBLIC SERIES

Following a number of domestic training camps, June saw the CommBank Junior Matildas continue their preparations for Round 2 against Korea Republic. This time, it was the Koreans playing host and the Aussies who would take out the series.

A tightly contested opening match ended in a 1–1 draw, with the Australians going on to dominate the second fixture, with a 3–1 win. That victory also sealed a 1–0 series win for the CommBank Junior Matildas and provided a confidence boost ahead of the trip to Vietnam.

SEPTEMBER 2023: AFC U17 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP INDONESIA 2024™ QUALIFIERS – ROUND 2

Qualification for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024™ was on the line in September when the CommBank Junior Matildas travelled to the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi, for Round 2.

Drawn in Group B, Australia was scheduled to face Philippines, hosts Vietnam, and Bangladesh. After falling behind by two goals in their opening match against Philippines, the CommBank Junior Matildas fired back to claim an emphatic 6–2 victory with six different goalscorers.

“AUSTRALIA DEMONSTRATED ITS FIGHTING SPIRIT AGAIN IN THE SECOND MATCH AGAINST VIETNAM, AT THE VIETNAM YOUTH FOOTBALL TRAINING CENTER.”

After falling behind in the 28th minute, the CommBank Junior Matildas regrouped to produce a goal storm to the end of the half, with forward Sienna Dale recording a brace. These two goals were enough for the Australia to clinch an important 2–1 win.

With qualification all but sealed, the final group game against Bangladesh saw a confident Australia control the proceedings from start to finish. Dale, the player of the round, was on song with all four goals in Australia's dominant 4–0 win, earning her right to punch a ticket to Indonesia.



SUBWAY OLYROOS

(U23 MNT)

For Australia's U23 Men's National Team program, 2023 served as an important year, which culminated in the team securing its place at the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024™; the Subway Olyroos U23s are now one step closer to Paris 2024™ Olympics qualification.

MARCH TRAINING CAMP – AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT EUROPEAN TRAINING CENTRE IN GAVIRATE, ITALY

Subway Olyroos Head Coach, Tony Vidmar, assembled his first squad since being appointed to the role, with 24 players participating in a camp at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) European Training Centre in Gavirate, Varese, in Northern Italy from 20 to 28 March.

Fifteen players from Australia's A-League and nine from overseas teams gathered for the nine-day training camp in Italy, which included matches against Switzerland's U20 team at the Stadio Comunale Bellinzona and Serie B outfit Como 1907.

In the opening friendly against Switzerland's U20s, the Subway Olyroos suffered a 1–0 loss; however, they bounced back against Como 1907 at the picturesque Stadio Giuseppe Sinigaglia with a strong 4–0 win through goals by Noah Botic, Louis D'Arrigo, Jake Hollman and Alou Kuol.

JUNE – MAURICE REVELLO TOURNAMENT, FRANCE

In June, the 2023 Olyroos became the first Australian team to compete in the prestigious Maurice Revello Tournament and they made a real statement, finishing third, following a 2–0 victory over the hosts, France, in the third-place play-off.

The Maurice Revello Tournament (formally known as the Toulon Tournament), is usually for U20 and U21 national teams; however, to support countries to prepare for Paris 2024™ Olympics qualification, in 2023, teams could feature players born between 2001 and 2004.

The selected 24 players first came together at the AIS European Training Centre in Italy on 26 May for a six-day camp in preparation for the tournament, which was played at six venues across Aix-en-Provence, France.





The 2023 edition of the Maurice Revello Tournament featured 12 U23 national men's teams, where Australia was drawn in Group B with Qatar, Togo – replaced by Mediterranean Select, and Mexico. Group A featured Costa Rica, France, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, with Group C comprising Morocco, Ivory Coast, Japan and Panama.

En route to the Semi-Finals, Australia was defeated by Qatar 4–3 on penalties but claimed a 3–2 victory over the Mediterranean Select team, and scored an eye-catching 2–0 win over Mexico.

The Subway Olyroos then met Panama in the Semi-Finals, where a 10-man Australian side conceded a late 88th-minute goal, falling to a narrow 2–1 loss.

In their highlight performance of the tournament, two first-half goals from Jake Hollman and Louis D'Arrigo saw the Australians secure an impressive 2–0 victory over France, to claim third place at the world-renowned tournament.

AFC U23 ASIAN CUP QATAR 2024™ QUALIFIERS

In September, the Subway Olyroos confirmed their place at the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024™, when they topped Group I of the Qualifiers played in Tajikistan.

Head Coach, Tony Vidmar, named an exciting 23-man squad, who arrived in Dushanbe at the end of August to commence their preparations for the two group matches against Laos and Tajikistan.

Vidmar's squad featured several players plying their trade in Europe, including Cam Peupion (Brighton & Hove Albion FC), Calem Nieuwenhof (Heart of Midlothian FC), Marlee Francois (Bristol City FC), Nectarios Triantis (Sunderland AFC) and Patrick Yazbek (Viking FK).

They were joined by the likes of Callum Talbot (Melbourne City FC), Jacob Farrell (Central Coast Mariners FC), Jake Hollman (Macarthur Bulls FC), Nishan Velupillay (Melbourne Victory FC), and Noah Botic (Western United) from the Isuzu UTE A-League.



The Australians sent a message of intent with a dominant 7–1 victory over Laos in their opening match, only needing a point from their second fixture to progress to the U23 Asian Cup scheduled from 15 April – 3 May 2024. And the Subway Olyroos did just that, with a 1–1 draw against the hosts in front of a large and vocal crowd.

In qualifying for AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024™, the Olyroos are also one step closer to securing a place at Paris 2024™, where the semi-finalists from Qatar go on to represent the Asian Confederation at the Olympic Games in France.

SUBWAY OLYROOS SQUAD – AFC U23 ASIAN CUP QATAR 2024™ QUALIFIERS

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Hosine BILITY | 13. Lucas MAURAGIS |
| 2. Nicholas BILOKAPIC | 14. Calem NIEUWENHOF |
| 3. Noah BOTIC | 15. Cameron PEUPION |
| 4. Lachlan BROOK | 16. Joshua RAWLINS |
| 5. Cameron COOK | 17. Callum TALBOT |
| 6. Jordan COURTNEY-PERKINS | 18. Ryan TEAGUE |
| 7. Ethan COX | 19. Mohamed TOURE |
| 8. Louis D'ARRIGO | 20. Kai TREWIN |
| 9. Jacob FARRELL | 21. Nectarios TRIANTIS |
| 10. Marlee FRANCOIS | 22. Nishan VELUPILLAY |
| 11. Jake HOLLMAN | 23. Patrick YAZBEK |
| 12. Alou KUOL | |

AFC U23 ASIAN CUP QATAR 2024™ QUALIFIERS' RESULTS

30 August – 12 September 2023

Wednesday 6 September, Republican Central Stadium, Dushanbe

Australia 7 (Velupillay 2', 4', D'Arrigo 7', Botic 21', 55', Brook 59', A. Kuol 79') defeated Laos 1

Tuesday 12 September, Republican Central Stadium, Dushanbe

Australia 1 (Peupion 12') drew with Tajikistan 1



SUBWAY YOUNG SOCCEROOS (U20 MNT)

It was a busy year in 2023 for the Australia U20 program, with the AFC U20 Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2023™ taking place in March, and the commencement of a new cycle in the second half of the year, which included participation in two prestigious four nations tournaments.

The Subway Young Socceroos' quest to qualify for FIFA U20 World Cup 2023™ led a talented 23-player squad to Uzbekistan for the AFC U20 Asian Cup™, where Australia needed to reach the Semi-Finals to progress to Argentina and the World Cup. Unfortunately, the Australians lost to the host nation and eventual U20 Asian Cup winners, Uzbekistan, on penalties in the Quarter-Finals.

“THE AUSTRALIANS STARTED THE GROUP STAGE OF THE TOURNAMENT WITH A 1–0 LOSS TO VIETNAM, WHICH IMMEDIATELY PUT PRESSURE ON THE TEAM TO CLAIM WINS IN THEIR REMAINING TWO MATCHES.”

And win they did, starting with an impressive 3–2 victory against IR Iran.

In the eighth minute, Adrian Segecic played a delightful through-ball for Jed Drew, who cut it across the face of goal for Aidan Simmons to tap home at the back post. Segecic then added a second goal after 16 minutes, curling home a superb free kick from an acute angle.

With the score 2–1 at half-time, Australia wasted no time extending their advantage in the second half. Segecic was again the finisher, meeting a precise Alessandro Lopane cut-back to curl a well-struck effort into the bottom corner after 47 minutes.

Australia continued pressing forward, and Jed Drew saw a strike cleared off the line in the 67th minute, while Segecic and substitute Bernardo both also went close.

It was then a goal-fest for Australia in the final group stage match against Qatar, with the Subway Young Socceroos winning 9–1 and securing a place in the Quarter-Finals.



An own goal by Argentina, a Bernardo brace and close-range finishes from Chris Donnell, Raphael Rodrigues, Jonny Yull, Gabriel Popovic, Archie Goodwin and Alex Badolato overturned the initial deficit in what was a rampant display.

Despite being level on points with IR Iran (6) and boasting a superior goal difference, Australia finished as runners-up in their group due to the third tournament tie-breaker – goals scored in head-to-head matches among tied teams – after IR Iran beat Vietnam 3–1, which saw them meet Uzbekistan in the quarters.

The Subway Young Socceroos then suffered a heartbreaking 5–4 Quarter-Final defeat on penalties in front of more than 33,000 spectators at the Milliy Stadium.

Popovic’s second-half finish was swiftly cancelled out by Abdirakhmatov Zafarmurod in the pulsating fixture as the match ended 1–1 after full-time. Another 30 minutes was unable to separate the two teams leading to the dreaded penalty shootout.

Nectarios Triantis, Goodwin, Joshua Rawlins and Badolato all expertly converted their penalties with Uzbekistan replying at every stage.

However, Segecic, who was one of Australia’s players of the tournament, unluckily saw his effort cannon off the crossbar, which enabled Umarali Rakhmonaliev to step up and slot the winning spot-kick, sparking wild scenes and the end of Australia’s campaign.

SUBWAY YOUNG SOCCEROOS SQUAD – AFC U20 ASIAN CUP UZBEKISTAN 2023™

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Alexander BADOLATO | 10. Alessandro LOPANE |
| 2. Raphael BORGES RODRIGUES | 11. Panashe MADANHA |
| 3. Rhys BOZINOVSKI | 12. Kaelan MAJEKODUNMI |
| 4. Matthew DENCH | 13. James NIEUWENHUIZEN |
| 5. Chris DONNELL | 14. Bernardo OLIVEIRA |
| 6. Jed DREW | 15. Gabriel POPOVIC |
| 7. Joseph FORDE | 16. Joshua RAWLINS |
| 8. Jake GIRDWOOD-REICH | 17. Jing REEC |
| 9. Archie GOODWIN | 18. Alexander ROBINSON |

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 19. Adrian SEGECIC | 22. Jack WARSHAWSKY |
| 20. Aidan SIMMONS | 23. Jonny YULL |
| 21. Nectarios TRIANTIS | |

AFC U20 ASIAN CUP UZBEKISTAN 2023™ RESULTS 1–18 MARCH 2023

Wednesday 1 March, Istiqlol Stadium, Fergana

Australia 0 defeated by Vietnam 1

Saturday 4 March, Istiqlol Stadium, Fergana

Australia 3 (Simmons 8 , Segecic 19 , 46) defeated Iran 2

Tuesday 7 March, JAR Stadium, Tashkent

Australia 9 (Alghareeb OG 13’ , Donnell 22’ , Rodrigues 25’ , Bernardo 39’ , 67’ , Yull 76’ , Popovic 79’ , Goodwin 90’ , Badolato 90+2’) defeated Qatar 1

Saturday 11 March, Milliy Stadium, Tashkent – Quarter-Finals

Australia 1 (4) (Popovic 77’) defeated by Uzbekistan 1 (5)

PORTUGAL SUB-18 INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT

In June, Football Australia continued its focus on national Youth Team programs, when it sent an U18 men’s squad to compete in a four nations tournament in Portugal.

With the Subway Young Socceroos agonisingly missing out on FIFA U20 World Cup™ qualification, Head Coach, Trevor Morgan, selected a 20-strong squad of players born in 2005 to contest the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) Portugal Sub-18 International Tournament.

The FPF Portugal Sub-18 was played in Lisbon from 5–15 June and featured U18 national team squads representing England, Portugal, Norway and Australia in a round-robin format.

“MORGAN SAID THE TOURNAMENT PRESENTED THE CHANCE FOR OUR NEXT CROP OF PROSPECTIVE SUBWAY YOUNG SOCCEROOS TO EXPERIENCE HIGH-QUALITY INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL.”

‘It’s important we continue to provide opportunities for our best emerging talent to gain exposure to international competition as we look ahead to the next U20 FIFA World Cup™ qualifying campaign, which will commence in 2024.

‘This invitational tournament in Portugal saw those selected play matches against three of Europe’s leading nations at both youth and senior level, which is the type of competition we are seeking to develop the next generation of Socceroos,’ Morgan explained.

Australia was defeated by Portugal 4–2 in the opening match; however, as the week progressed, they gained confidence, losing a last-minute 3–2 win by England in the second match, but then claiming a notable 2–1 victory over Norway to round out the tournament.

MARBELLA WEEK OF FOOTBALL

During October, a 23-player squad represented Australia at the Marbella Week of Football held in Marbella, Spain during the FIFA International Men’s Window.

The friendlies – hosted at the prestigious Marbella Football Centre – featured U19 teams from Belgium, Denmark, France, Switzerland and Netherlands.

The Subway Young Socceroos impressed many during the tournament – including football royalty Zinedine Zidane, who was in attendance – with the Australians claiming three superb wins – each going to penalties – over England, Netherlands and Denmark.



SUBWAY JOEYS

(U17 MNT)

Perseverance and dedication in the footballing world often leads to the greatest achievements, and the Subway Joeys, Australia's U17 Men's National Team, embodies this spirit according to the program's Head Coach and former Socceroo, Brad Maloney.

During 2023, the Subway Joeys competed in the AFC U17 Asian Cup™ in Thailand, displaying admirable determination despite facing significant hurdles. Although the Subway Joeys narrowly missed out on qualifying for this year's FIFA U17 World Cup™, being defeated 3–1 by eventual champions, Japan, in the Quarter-Finals, the team's performance was nothing short of commendable.

At the time, Maloney praised the players' unwavering work ethic during the tournament, despite facing adversity from the start. The team had minimal opportunities to train together, assembling just twice to prepare before departing for the competition, where they would face the best teams in Asia.

Following the Qualifiers in October 2022, the team's preparation comprised the Antalya Youth Cup, a four nations tournament in Turkey during February, and a four-day camp in Sydney during April.

Reflecting upon the AFC U17 Asian Cup, Maloney remarked: 'I thought our overall tournament result was a good achievement from the group, not forgetting that Japan is a powerhouse of Asian football and went on to win the whole thing.'

"WE WERE ON THE TOUGHEST SIDE OF THE DRAW, BUT THE PLAYERS GAVE EVERYTHING THEY HAD, AND I CAN'T FAULT THEM FOR THAT."

'On limited preparation and against countries who invest heavily in youth development, we look back on our performance in Thailand with a sense of pride.'

On the team's preparations for Thailand, Maloney pinpoints the importance of international exposure and experience at a higher level and highlights the tournament in Turkey as a real learning curve for the young Australians.



‘Playing matches every 72 hours, contending with extreme weather conditions, and facing diverse opponents provided valuable lessons.

‘These are the types of opportunities we need more of, not only to accelerate skill development, but also maturity and understanding of the sport.

‘It was the first time some of the boys have ever been overseas, and then you’re playing against nations that are full-time in their own environments.

‘To have that kind of opposition for me was invaluable and the players, I think, learned a lot from that tournament, realising that the opposition are full-time, street-smart, athletic, well-developed, mature young players. For me, that international experience is vital; it’s imperative the players get as much as possible.’

Captain for this cycle was goalkeeper Anthony Pavlešić, who emerged as a shining light from the tournament in Turkey, landing a contract with European giants, FC Bayern Munich.

Maloney sees great potential in these rising stars and believes they can become integral players in the senior National Team, representing Australia at major international tournaments with the right opportunities and guidance.

‘This is the foundation of the Subway Socceroos. My role here is to work with these players for two years or so and during that period, prepare them as best we can for the next step.

‘Someone like Pav (Anthony Pavlešić), for example, I think it’s a fantastic achievement for him to get that offer from Bayern Munich. Other players including Mitch Glasson, Zac de Jesus, Daniel Bennie, and Nathan Amanatidis have signed an A-League contract on their return from the AFC Asian Cup™ and I’ve no doubt others will follow.

‘These opportunities to play on the international stage are really giving these players a platform to show what they can do. It’s really pleasing to see they’ve been rewarded on their return with first-team contracts.’

But before a training cone is placed or a football inflated, Maloney faces challenges in identifying talent across the vastness of Australia. The geographic disadvantage involves extensive travel to scout players from every corner of the continent.

Meeting players in person and assessing their character, attitude and desire to work hard are essential aspects of the selection process.

‘I went to pretty much every state and territory to look at the players, watch league matches and meet the players in person.

‘Then, once we bring them into a centralised camp, you get to know their playing ability but, of course, you want to see a lad with a good character and attitude. We look for their desire to work hard, to achieve what he wants to achieve and represent the country.

‘We would like to think we’re putting good networks in place so players don’t slip through the net.’

Part of this process centres around the annual National Youth Championships, which plays a pivotal role in Football Australia’s Talent Identification program.

Maloney attended the 2023 National Youth Championships Boys’ tournament held at Valentines Sports Park in Sydney during October, where he and his coaching staff were able to assess ‘the best of the best’ domestic-based players in the U15 and U16 age groups, as the team enters a new cycle for Australia’s U17 National Team program.

SUBWAY JOEYS SQUAD – AFC U17 ASIAN CUP THAILAND 2023™

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Nathan AMANATIDIS | 9. Mitchell GLASSON |
| 2. Peter ANTONIOU | 10. Daniel GRASKOSKI |
| 3. Nathan BARRIE | 11. Aden GREEN |
| 4. Daniel BENNIE | 12. Jordan HOEY |
| 5. Giovanni DE ABREU | 13. Eddie INCE |
| 6. Zac DE JESUS | 14. Nestory IRANKUNDA |
| 7. Miguel DI PIZIO | 15. Andriano LEBIB |
| 8. Campbell DOVISON | 16. Richard NKOMO |

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 17. Bailey O’NEIL | 21. Corey SUTHERLAND |
| 18. Anthony PAVLEŠIĆ (Cpt) | 22. Fabian TALLADIRA |
| 19. Sotiri PHILLIS | 23. Michael VONJA |
| 20. Tiago QUINTAL | |

Head Coach: Brad Maloney

Assistant Coach: Michael Cooper

Goalkeeper Coach: Davide Del Giovine

Team Manager: Jarrod Denham

Sports Scientist: Josh Gould

Doctor: Andriy Boyko

Physiotherapist: Luis Resa

Equipment Manager: Guido Chayan

Analyst: Huw Cox

AFC U17 ASIAN CUP THAILAND 2023™ RESULTS 15 JUNE – 2 JULY 2023

Friday 16 June, Chonburi Stadium

Australia 0 defeated by Saudi Arabia 2

Monday 19 June, Chonburi Stadium

Australia 5 (Irankunda 9’, 18’, De Abreu 12’, Glasson 25’, Amanatidis 90+8’) defeated China PR 3

Thursday 22 June, Rajamangala National Stadium (Bangkok)

Australia 2 (Bennie 64’, Amanatidis 90+9’) defeated Tajikistan 0

Monday 26 June, Pathum Thani Stadium (Bangkok) – Quarter-Finals

Australia 1 (Irankunda 62’) defeated by Japan 3 (Nawata 10’, Michiwaki 23’, Takaoka 74’)



COMMBANK PARAMATILDAS

The CommBank ParaMatildas, Australia's National Team for women and girls with cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury, or symptoms acquired from stroke, continued to make strides in their history-making footballing journey, successfully hosting several development training camps, and participating in their first ever invitational tournament in Japan.

KEY MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

DOMESTIC TRAINING CAMPS

In 2023, the CommBank ParaMatildas hosted several training camps in Sydney and Canberra to develop the squad, identify new talent and prepare for international competition. With a focus on physical conditioning, team building and tactical gameplay, these camps allowed the world number one women's CP football team to further enhance their skills ahead of a gruelling international calendar, which will include an Asia Cup and World Cup within a six-month period.

Several new players joined the extended squad, including former Paralympian Tasmine Colley and Canberra-youngster Bec Jones. Tasmine was alongside World Cup legends Georgia Beikoff, Eloise Northam and Tahlia Blanshard, and these talented players showed the importance of this team in providing a pathway for fierce female footballers.

JAPAN INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

In August 2023, the CommBank ParaMatildas embarked on a series of thrilling matches in Japan as part of their first ever invitational international tournament. These encounters showcased their exceptional skill and determination on the global stage, reaffirming their status as a powerhouse in women's CP football. With 9-0, 6-1 and 8-0 wins, these matches provided the coaching staff with the opportunity to unleash several debutants, including goalkeeper Carly Salmon, and dynamic strikers Karina Grigorian and Annmarie Duarte.

The CommBank ParaMatildas have demonstrated remarkable progress and determination since launching in 2022. Their second-place finish in the inaugural 2022 IFCPF Women's World Cup in April 2022 set the tone for their first year and they have continued to rise to the challenge. The players' commitment to success on the field is matched only by their belief in empowering the next generation of women and girls to be undefeated, just like their footballing heroes.



COMMBANK PARAROOS

In 2023, the CommBank Pararoos, Australia's men's National Team for players with cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury, or symptoms acquired from stroke, celebrate 25 years of footballing history.

The team first formed in 1998 with funding from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) ahead of the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games. One of the founding members of the team, 43-year-old captain David Barber is still playing. On 106 caps, he is Australia's third most capped male player, behind Tim Cahill (108) and Mark Schwarzer (109).

The past year has been a remarkable journey. From securing a record-breaking result against archrivals USA, to unearthing the next generation of talented players, this team has once again demonstrated their trademark undefeated spirit on and off the field.

KEY MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

UNDEFEATED AT HOME

The CommBank Pararoos faced off against world number four USA on 4 February 2023, in Sydney/Gadigal, delivering an electrifying match that left more than 1,100 spectators on the edge of their seats. In particular, 43-year-old captain David Barber delivered a spectacular performance in goals, defying his age and the strength of the USA attack.

“SEVERAL YOUNGSTERS MADE THEIR DEBUT FOR AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING 17-YEAR-OLD LUC LAUNDER; AND 16-YEAR-OLD KAYLAN VAN HEER, WHO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO START ALONGSIDE HIS HERO, PARAROOS LEGEND BENNY ROCHE.”

Rafferty Bacon also made his debut. Raff's late father's wish was for him to be a Pararoo, and just nine months after his passing, 16-year-old Raff ran onto the field in the green and gold in front of his emotional friends and family.

As the final whistle blew, the score remained tied, securing the CommBank Pararoos' best ever result against powerhouse USA. This thrilling encounter not only served as a testament to the unwavering





spirit of the CommBank Pararoos, but also to the power of football to empower and excite football fans around the country.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The CommBank Pararoos hosted four domestic training camps during the year, which focused on youth development and aimed at nurturing future talent and expanding the extended player pool. This initiative has already identified several promising young players with incredible potential.

“AS THE COMMBANK PARAROOS COMMEMORATES 25 YEARS, AUSTRALIANS CAN BE PROUD THAT THIS TEAM HAS NOT ONLY CONTINUED TO SHOWCASE EXCEPTIONAL FOOTBALL TALENT, BUT HAS ALSO PROVEN THAT PASSION, PERSEVERANCE AND AN UNDEFEATED SPIRIT WILL ALWAYS TRIUMPH.”

FUTSALROOS

In July 2023, the Futsalroos made a triumphant return to action, marking a significant moment in Australian futsal history. They did so by participating in the PacificAus Sports International Futsal Series, hosted in collaboration with DFAT and featuring a highly anticipated showdown against Solomon Islands.

This series held immense significance for the Futsalroos, as it provided them with a rare opportunity to showcase their skills on home soil – a privilege they had not enjoyed since 2019. The passionate futsal community rallied behind their team, resulting in packed stadiums and an electric atmosphere throughout the tournament.

Under the guidance of Head Coach Miles Downie, a 23-player squad was assembled from talent scattered across Australia. Notably, this group included several promising young players who displayed the potential to become pivotal figures in the Futsalroos' future endeavours.

The series began with an exciting match at the grand opening of the Heffron Centre in Sydney, attended by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. This historic event further underscored the importance of futsal in Australian sports culture. The match ended in a thrilling 1–1 draw, with Daniel Fornito netting Australia's lone goal.

“AS THE SERIES PROGRESSED, THE FUTSALROOS FOUND THEIR RHYTHM, CLINCHING VICTORIES IN THE NEXT TWO MATCHES WITH SCORES OF 3–2 AND 5–3 AT THE CENTRE, DURAL.”

Looking ahead, the Futsalroos are gearing up for the AFC qualifiers scheduled for October 2023. These qualifiers will pit them against formidable opponents, including reigning Asian champions Japan, and Taipei. Success in these qualifiers will pave the way for the coveted AFC Futsal Championships in Thailand in April 2024, which will serve as the gateway to the 2024 Futsal World Cup™ in Uzbekistan.



COMPETITIONS



AUSTRALIA CUP

The Australia Cup 2023 saw a record 775 Clubs enter what is the largest national knockout competition in the country. The Preliminary Rounds began on Thursday 9 February, culminating in the Australia Cup Final at Sydney's Allianz Stadium and contested between Sydney FC and Brisbane Roar FC in front of 15,482 spectators. The Australia Cup is a competition that connects and unites all levels of the game, pitting part-timers against seasoned professionals, all with the aim of securing silverware and the chance to participate in Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Club Competitions. The Australia Cup is not just local, it's also global.

The Final Rounds, which include 32 clubs, is a completely open draw, meaning any team can face any opponent. The draw contained three debutant clubs in Goulburn Valley Suns FC (VIC), Inglewood United FC (WA) and Inter Lions FC (NSW). Prior to the Final Rounds commencing, the Australia Cup Playoffs took place in Darwin as part of a Festival of Football, providing national-level content to the region and the first appearance by an A-League Club since 2018.

“NEWCASTLE JETS OVERCAME A YOUTHFUL MELBOURNE VICTORY IN A PENALTY SHOOTOUT, WITH DEFENDING CUP WINNERS MACARTHUR FC BREEZING PAST PERTH GLORY 4-0 TO QUALIFY FOR THE FINAL ROUNDS.”

With Australia and New Zealand hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup™ (FWWC), the Round of 32 was scheduled on the tournament rest days, to ensure both competitions were given maximum exposure while enabling football fans to attend or watch either event without having to choose one over the other. This year's Round of 32 kicked off with Broadmeadow Magic FC (NNSW) facing last year's Cup Finalists Sydney United 58 FC (NSW), which saw six goals scored in a seesawing affair. In fact, there were a total of 135 goals scored in the Final Rounds, an increase of eight from last year.

The Round of 32 provided us with some memorable Cup moments: Lachlan Brook scored a record five goals in a single match for Western Sydney Wanderers; Sydney FC downed Central Coast Mariners in a penalty shootout 10-9, with Goal Keeper Andrew Redmayne scoring the winning penalty; and South Australian side Campbelltown City SC overcame Macarthur FC 2-1 in a Cupset that will be long remembered by those in attendance.





The Round of 16 will perhaps be best remembered by 15-year-old Quinn Macnicol, who became the youngest goalscorer in the Final Rounds when he netted Brisbane Roar's fifth goal of the afternoon.

The Quarter-Final stage was highlighted by MetroStars (SA) going toe-to-toe with A-League Premiers Melbourne City, almost causing another Cupset, before two late goals saw City progress. The MetroStars(SA) dynamic midfielder Hamish Gow was awarded the Mike Cockerill Medal for his outstanding campaign, where he embodied the legacy of late journalist and avid supporter of grassroots and NPL football Michael Cockerill.

“BOTH AUSTRALIA CUP SEMI-FINALS WERE PLAYED IN MELBOURNE, PLAYED IN MELBOURNE, WHERE SYDNEY FC BOOKED THEIR SPOT IN A FOURTH AUSTRALIA CUP FINAL, FOLLOWED BY BRISBANE ROAR NARROWLY DEFEATING MELBOURNE KNIGHTS TO REACH THEIR FIRST MAJOR FINAL IN A DECADE, AS OVER 5,000 PEOPLE WATCHED ON.”

On Saturday 7 October, Sydney FC came from a goal down to beat the Roar 3–1, sealing their second Australia Cup, which was broadcast live and free on Network 10 and 10 play. Sydney's influential winger Joe Lolley was named Mark Viduka Medallist, an award given to the best player of the match and in honour of Australian football legend Mark Viduka.



NATIONAL SECOND TIER

Football Australia dedicated significant efforts towards the creation and introduction of a National Second Tier (NST) competition in 2023. Following extensive analysis and consultation in 2022, Football Australia commenced the NST Application Process in February 2023. This process consisted of four phases: Expression of Interest (EOI), Request for Proposal (RFP), Assessment and Review, and Completion.

The EOI phase provided the opportunity for aspiring applicants from around the country to submit relevant information about their current status and vision for participation in the NST. A total of 32 EOIs, with representation from clubs and/or entities from eight of nine Member Federations, were received and subsequently evaluated based on the established criteria.

With significant interest in the competition firmly established, 26 respondents were then progressed to the RFP phase, which kicked off in June. Football Australia engaged accounting and advisory experts BDO as an independent third party to assist. Respondents were provided with comprehensive materials relating to the proposed NST, as well as instructions and templates for proposal submissions.

Following the submission deadline in August, Football Australia and BDO launched the Assessment and Review phase, undertaking a thorough and detailed evaluation of the 15 submissions. Each respondent was assessed against the mandatory requirements and the evaluation criteria.

The Assessment and Review Phase concluded in October. Eight respondents met the mandatory requirements and were selected to participate in the NST competition as per the evaluation criteria. An additional two to four clubs will be identified through a subsequent application process, which will take place in 2024.

The Completion phase, conducted in November, closed out the 2023 NST application process, culminating in the eight selected clubs signing Club Participation Agreements (CPAs) and a press conference on 20 November announcing these foundational clubs. The eight selected clubs are outlined below:

APIA LEICHHARDT FC	SOUTH MELBOURNE FC	AVONDALE FC	SYDNEY OLYMPIC FC
MARCONI STALLIONS FC	SYDNEY UNITED FC	PRESTON LIONS FC	WOLLONGONG WOLVES FC

Football Australia announced that the NST will commence in March or April 2025, with 10 or 12 teams to participate in the inaugural season featuring home and away matches plus a finals series. This announcement is the culmination of years of advocacy and efforts from football stakeholders around the country, and will be a crucial football initiative to continue development and professionalisation efforts at club level.

Football Australia will work diligently and collaboratively in 2024 to prepare for a successful inaugural season of this eagerly anticipated competition.



NATIONAL FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2023 National Futsal Championships were held in Melbourne, with almost 1,000 participants from over 100 state representative teams playing for national glory. These championships were the first to be held since the COVID-19 pandemic and proved to be a resounding success.

In addition to representative teams from Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, international teams from New Zealand and Solomon Islands travelled to Melbourne to battle for gold. The championships were disputed across 12 divisions, from U12 boys and U13 girls, through to Open Men, Open Women and AWD categories. Hosted at the Melbourne Sports Centre, Parkville, fixtures took place across five courts simultaneously from morning to night, providing a feast of fast-paced, five-a-side action for spectators. With all participating teams playing in the one top-class venue, there were no matches lacking support. Crowds were packed into the stands and created an atmosphere worthy of the occasion. For the first time, there were also opportunities for the winning men's and women's teams to compete against the best teams in South-East Asia at international competitions. The 2023 National Futsal Championships also saw the stop-clock introduced for the first time in the senior competitions and the final two minutes of all junior matches. This change was a masterstroke and opened the eyes of the Australian public to the heart-stopping appeal of the game in its true form.

“THE-STOP-CLOCK BENEFITED THE GAMES GREATLY AS IT ELIMINATED TIME-WASTING TACTICS, RESULTING IN A WHOLE NEW LEVEL OF TACTICAL INTERVENTION FROM TEAMS AND REGULAR, EXHILARATING FINISHES TO GAMES, WITH THE LEAD OFTEN CHANGING MULTIPLE TIMES IN THE DYING MOMENTS.”

The flow-on from the stop-clock initiative into Member Federation-based competitions means the 2023 National Futsal Championships' positive impact on the game in Australia will be felt for many years to come.



NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2023 National Youth Championships were successfully conducted in New South Wales in October. Football Australia hosted the best 2007- and 2008-born High-Performance Boys selected from around the country, at Valentine Sports Park in Sydney from 2 to 6 October, and the best 2007- and 2009-born High-Performance Girls selected nationally at WIN Stadium and JJ Kelly Park in Wollongong from 9 to 13 October.

This elite youth tournament provided an opportunity for nearly 800 players (442 boys and 352 girls) representing their state or territory, with a chance to showcase their talent across two weeks and impress U17 National Team coaches for potential Joeys or Junior Matildas selections.

Individual awards were also presented to the following participants:

“THE BOYS’ CHAMPIONSHIPS INCLUDED MORE THAN 340 GOALS OVER 93 MATCHES FOR THE U15 AND U16 DIVISIONS, WITH A FULL STAND WATCHING THE GRAND FINALS ON FRIDAY. THE TWO GRAND FINALS FEATURED TEAMS FROM VICTORIA, QUEENSLAND AND NEW SOUTH WALES, WITH VICTORIA COMPLETING THE SWEEP BY WINNING BOTH THE U15 AND U16 AGE GROUPS.”

GOALKEEPER OF THE TOURNAMENT

U15 – Noah Ellul (Football South Australia)

U16 – Robert Cook (Football Western Australia)

PLAYERS OF THE TOURNAMENT

U15 – Alexander Houridis (Football Victoria)

U16 – Christian Polyzoudis (Football Victoria)





The girls' championships included three divisions: U14B, U14A and U16. More than 190 goals were scored across 64 matches. Each team competed at WIN Stadium, providing a unique and elevated championships experience. The U14B girls' championships also saw the inaugural Indigenous Invitational XI team compete against the best 2009-born girls in the country, with the Indigenous Invitational XI team finishing third place in Group B and advancing to the Semi-Finals.

“THE THREE GRAND FINALS FEATURED TEAMS FROM THE ACT, QUEENSLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA, WITH CAPITAL FOOTBALL, VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES EMERGING VICTORIOUS.”

Individual awards were also presented to the following participants:

GOALKEEPER OF THE TOURNAMENT

U14B – Amalie Miller (Football Tasmania)

U14A – Caoimhe (Keeba) Bray (Football Northern NSW)

U16 – Lilly Dunn (Football Queensland)

PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT

U14B – Tehya Espland (Capital Football)

U14A – Claire Corbett (Football NSW)

U16 – Sienna Dale (Football NSW)

The 2023 National Youth Championships also provided development opportunities for up-and-coming coaches and referees from around the nation.

U15 BOYS WINNERS	U15 BOYS RUNNERS-UP
Victoria Blue	Queensland White
U16 BOYS WINNERS	U16 BOYS RUNNERS-UP
Victoria Blue	NSW Metro White
U14 GIRLS GROUP B PLATE WINNERS	U14 GIRLS GROUP B PLATE RUNNERS-UP
Capital Football	Queensland Silver
U14 GIRLS GROUP A WINNERS	U14 GIRLS GROUP A RUNNERS-UP
Victoria	NSW Metro
U16 GIRLS WINNERS	U16 GIRLS RUNNERS-UP
NSW Metro	Victoria



2023 IFCPF ASIA OCEANIA CHAMPIONSHIPS

In November, Football Australia hosted the 2023 IFCFP Asia Oceania Championships at the recently completed Home of the Matildas at La Trobe University in Melbourne. It proved to be a tournament of firsts: the first time Australia had hosted an international CP football tournament, the first-ever women's CP football regional tournament, the first tournament on home soil in 23 years for the CommBank Pararoos, and the first home game for the CommBank ParaMatildas.

A goal to CommBank Pararoos' Daniel Campbell secured a tough 1-1 draw in their opening match against Thailand. Tournament favourites Iran were too strong the following day, with the powerhouse finishing 3-1 victors. However, not before Jeremy Boyce scored Australia's first-ever goal against the world number three.

Connor Bunce scored four sensational goals as the CommBank Pararoos secured their first win of the tournament defeating Japan 7-1. Daniel Campbell netted one himself with fan-favourite Kaylan Van Heer secured a brace.

In their final group game, the CommBank Pararoos beat first-time participants India 11-0 to secure a spot in the Final and qualify for the 2024 IFCFP World Cup.

"A STANDING OVATION AND A GUARD OF HONOUR CELEBRATED 43-YEAR-OLD CAPTAIN DAVID BARBER'S RECORD-BREAKING 110TH APPEARANCE AS HE BECAME THE MOST-CAPPED AUSTRALIAN MALE PLAYER."

Boasting a full-time professional roster, Iran would always pose a challenge for Australia in the Men's Final. The CommBank Pararoos pushed the defending champions all the way in front of a record crowd, before ultimately going down 2-0.

The women's competition included world number one Australia, Japan, and Nepal.

While Nepal were unable to field a team that met IFCPF competitive and classification requirements, and tournament points were not awarded for their matches, this will be the start of a wonderful journey for women and girls with disability in Nepal.





A brace to Georgia Beikoff and a goal to Annmarie De Uriarte meant that the CommBank ParaMatildas first ever international fixture on home soil ended in victory. Five goals to Nicole Christodoulou, and a hattrick to debutante Tamsin Colley, helped the CommBank ParaMatildas to a 10-0 victory over Nepal on matchday two of the tournament.

“AUSTRALIA FOUND THEMSELVES IN AN UNFAMILIAR POSITION – BEHIND FOR THE FIRST TIME AGAINST JAPAN – ON MATCH DAY THREE. BUT THE COMMBANK PARAMATILDAS DUG DEEP AND CAME FROM 2-1 DOWN AT HALF TIME TO SECURE A 4-2 WIN.”

It was Australia who emerged victorious in the women's tournament against a formidable Japanese squad, celebrated their first-ever tournament win with a 2-0 over Japan. Nicole Christodoulou was named Player of the Tournament; Katelyn Smith secured the Golden Glove and Georgia Beikoff took home her second Golden Boot.

The championships garnered unprecedented attention, thanks to a groundbreaking broadcast collaboration with SBS. The national broadcaster brought the tournament to life, increasing visibility and awareness for cerebral palsy football with high-quality broadcast and digital media production.

Beyond the thrilling matches, the championships set records in merchandise sales, demonstrating the growing popularity and support for cerebral palsy football.

Fans flocked to the Home of the Matildas in unprecedented numbers, creating an electrifying atmosphere that echoed the push for inclusivity and recognition of disability athletes.

The 2023 IFCPF Asia Oceania Championships was a triumph for CP Football, with outstanding performances, record-breaking attendance, and a significant boost in merchandise sales. The success of the CommBank ParaMatildas and the CommBank Pararoos, coupled with the widespread media coverage, ensures the legacy of this tournament will continue for generations to come.



IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM



Vale Manfred Schaefer

Socceroo cap #198, 1974 FIFA World Cup™ representative, and Football Australia Hall of Fame inductee.



Vale Billy Williams

Australian international representative, 1955.



Vale Elaine Watson OAM

Australian women's football administrator and pioneer, former Australia Women's Soccer Association president and team manager.



Vale Rale Rasic OAM

First Socceroos coach at a FIFA World Cup™ Finals (1974), National Soccer League Championship, Coach of the Year, NSL Cup winner, Football Australia Hall of Fame inductee.



Vale Attila Abonyi

Socceroo cap #191, 1974 FIFA World Cup™ representative, and Football Australia Hall of Fame inductee.



Vale Peter Gray

Australian football player and administrator, Football Australia Hall of Fame inductee.

HALL OF FAME





HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

2022 (6)

- Moya Dodd
- Collette Gardiner (nee McCallum)
- Walter Pless
- Ange Postecoglou
- Brendan Schwab
- Ted Smith

2021 (4)

- Heather Garriock
- Kathryn Gill
- Joseph Huxley-Honeysett
- Mark Schwarzer

2019 (4)

- Leigh Wardell
- Harry Kewell
- Branko Culina
- Sir Frank Lowy

2018 (3)

- Sonia Gegenhuber

- Mark Bresciano

- Andrew Dettre

2016 (3)

- Tammy Ogston
- Peter Raskopoulos
- Sacha Wainwright

2015 (2)

- Lisa Casagrande
- John Moriarty

2014 (5)

- Sandra Brentnall
- Stefan Kamasz
- Damian Mori
- Tom Sermanni
- Mark Viduka

2013 (2)

- James Fraser
- Linda Hughes

2012 (3)

- Alison Forman
- Scott Chipperfield
- Alan Vessey

2011 (4)

- Craig Moore
- Dianne Alagich
- Ted Simmons
- Mike Cockerill

2010 (5)

- Ned Zelic
- Joanne Peters
- Stan Lazaridis
- Martyn Crook
- Mark Shield

2009 (5)

- Tony Vidmar
- Cheryl Salisbury
- Paul Okon

- John Economos

- Sam Vella

2008 (11)

- Tracey Wheeler
- George Keith
- Cliff Almond
- Julie Murray
- Aurelio Vidmar
- Mike Wells
- George Dick OAM
- Donato Di Fabrizio
- John De Witt
- Peter Desira
- John Thomson

2007 (9)

- Alex Tobin
- Terry Greedy
- Steve Blair
- Anissa Tan

- Eddie Lennie

- Heather Reid
- John Barclay
- Ted Rowley
- Trixie Tagg

2006 (9)

- David Mitchell
- Charlie Stewart
- Peter Sharne
- Ernie Campbell
- Robert Zabica
- Fred Villiers
- Raul Blanco
- Andre Kruger
- Ray Sandell

2005 (11)

- Mike Petersen
- Robbie Slater
- Allan Maher

- Alec Cameron

- Craig Johnston
- Bruce Morrow
- Roger Lamb
- Vic Dalglish
- Harry Hetherington
- Phil Murphy
- Gary Wilkins

2004 (11)

- Graham Arnold
- Jack Hughes
- Jack Reilly
- Todd Clarke
- Ian Gray
- Sue Monteath
- Peter Thorne
- Jane Oakley
- Roy Druery
- Gordon Dunster
- Fred Hutchison



2003 (18)

- Wally Savor
- Percy Lennard
- William 'Bill' Henderson
- Milan Ivanovic
- Colin Bennett
- Gary Cole
- Steve O'Connor
- Roy Crowhurst
- Theresa Deas
- David Harding
- Betty Hoar
- Les Murray
- Peter Gray
- Ken Allen
- Vito Cilauro
- Denis Harlow
- Joseph J Honeysett
- Peter Van Ryn

2002 (15)

- James Wilkinson
- Cindy Heydon
- George Harris
- Branko Buljevic
- Stan Ackerley
- Peter Ollerton
- Joanne Millman

- Norman Conquest
- Fred Robins
- Eddie Thomson
- George Vasilopoulos
- Allan Crisp
- Siri Kannangara
- Dennis McDermott
- Rodney Woods

2001 (24)

- Bill Vojtek
- Cecil Drummond
- Alan Davidson
- Frank Farina
- Tony Henderson
- Pat O'Connor
- David Ratcliffe
- Jim Tansey
- Leo Baumgartner
- Gary Byrne
- Robert Dunn
- Ken Murphy
- John Constantine
- Basil Scarsella
- Charles Caruso
- Doug Rennie
- Bill Vrolyks
- George Wallace

- Les Broadbent
- Sid Grant
- Eric Heath
- Bob McShane
- Arthur Roberts
- Bill Turner

2000 (19)

- Adrian Alston
- Eddie Krncevic
- Paul Wade
- Oscar Crino
- Doug Utjesenovic
- Murray Barnes
- Ron Corry
- Alex Gibb
- Kevin O'Neill
- Joe Watson
- Chris Bambridge
- Les Scheinflug
- Don Sutherland
- Charles Valentine
- Barry Bainbridge
- Jim Connell
- Charles Perkins
- Emmanuel Poulakakis
- John Taylor

1999 – INAUGURAL INDUCTION (84)

- George Smith
- Cliff Sander
- John Perin
- Frank Parsons
- Jeff Olver
- Gordon Nunn
- Sergio Melta
- Gary Marocchi
- Allan Johns
- Tom Jack
- William 'Bill' Henderson
- Jack Evans
- Michael De Bruyckere
- William Coolahan
- Jim Armstrong
- Ron Adair
- John Watkiss
- Ray Richards
- Graham Jennings
- Col Curran
- Charlie Yankos
- Harry Williams
- Manfred Schaefer
- John Nyskohus
- James McNabb
- William Maunder
- Jimmy MacKay

- Frank Loughran
- Bob Lawrie
- Julie Dolan
- Ray Baartz
- Peter Wilson
- Johnny Warren, MBE
- Jim Rooney
- Alf Quill
- James 'Judy' Masters
- Joe Marston MBE
- Ron Lord
- John Kosmina
- Reg Date
- Bob Bignell
- Attila Abonyi
- Ron Wright
- Sir William Walkley
- Joe Vlasits
- William Thomas
- Ron Smith
- Martin Royal
- Peter Nikolich
- Des Miles
- Graham McMillan
- Frank Mclver
- Zoran Matic
- Jack Logan
- Brian Lefevre
- Tony Kovac OAM

- Tom Grimson
- Keith Gilmour
- Pam Gilbert
- Harry Croft
- Donald Campbell
- Fred Barlow
- Eric Worthington
- Laurie Schwab
- Les Scheinflug
- Julius Re
- Sam Pappasavas OAM
- Dieter Klose
- Brian Corrigan
- Ian Brusasco AM
- Giacomo 'Jim' Bayutti OA
- Frank Arok
- Michael Weinstein AM, BEM
- Elaine Watson OAM
- Vic Tuting MBE
- Robert Telfer
- Rale Rasic
- Theo Maramaris MBE
- Arthur Gibbs
- John Walter Fletcher
- Harry Dockerty
- Tony Boscovic
- Connie Selby
- Sir Arthur George AO



BOARD & MANAGEMENT



BOARD COMMITTEES

Committee	Director Members	External Members	Football Australia Staff
Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC)	Joseph Carrozzi (Chair) Anter Isaac Spiro Pappas	Ernst & Young representatives	James Johnson Mark Falvo Christine Bishay Mel Mallam Stuart Corbishley (Secretary)
Football Development Committee (FDC)	Amy Duggan (Chair) Mark Bresciano Heather Garriock	Starting XI advisory panel to the FDC: Mark Bosnich, Catherine Cannuli, Joanne Peters, Frank Farina, Vicki Linton, Paul Okon, Clare Polkinghorne, Connie Selby, Josip Skoko, Ron Smith and Mark Viduka	James Johnson Ernie Merrick Paddy Steinfort (until August 2023) James Duvcevski (since August 2023) Natalie Lutz (Secretary)
Referees Committee	N/A	Ray Olivier (Chair) Graham Scott Allyson Flynn Nia Southwell Jim Ouliaris Adam Fielding Eleanor Hayes Greg O'Rourke (until August 2023)	Nathan Magill Mathew Cheeseman Tom Bragg (Secretary)

CONGRESS STANDING COMMITTEES

Committee	Director Members	External Members	Football Australia Staff
Nominations Standing Committee	Joseph Carrozzi (Chair)	Gino Marra Beau Busch Janette Spencer Sherif Andrawes	N/A
Finance and Risk Standing Committee	Joseph Carrozzi (Chair)	Sherif Andrawes Bob Gordon Simon Pearce Tim Pullman	Mark Falvo (Secretary)
Women's Football Council Standing Committee	N/A	Leigh Russell (Chair) Ally Green Caroline Carnegie Elise Kellond-Knight Helena Dorczak Erin Clout Janette Spencer Jo Smith Damaris Treasure John Sugunananthan	Sarah Walsh (Secretary)



FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



MR CHRIS NIKOU

CHAIR

Mr Nikou was appointed to the Football Australia Board in October 2014 and was elected Chair in November 2018. Mr Nikou is a senior partner of global law firm K & L Gates, practising in corporate and commercial law. He is currently a member of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Ex-Co, Deputy Chair of the AFC and ASEAN Legal Committees respectively, and Chair of Football Australia's Referees Committee. He was a director of the Local Organising Committee for the AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015 Limited until resigning on 19 June 2015 following the completion of the tournament, and was Co-Chair of the Australia – New Zealand FIFA Women's World Cup™ Bid Committee. He was also a member of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ 2023 Steering Committee. He was previously a director of Football Victoria and Company Secretary of Melbourne Victory FC.



MR MARK BRESCIANO

DIRECTOR

Mr Mark Bresciano was appointed to the Football Australia Board on 1 October 2019. Born in Melbourne, Mr Bresciano played youth football for Bulleen Lions, before moving into the National Soccer League with Carlton. In 1999, he moved to Italian Serie B side Empoli, beginning a 12-year stay in the country. In 2002, he moved to the Serie A with Parma, later playing for Palermo and S.S. Lazio. From 2011, he spent the final four years of his career in the Middle East, first with UAE Pro-League side Al Nasr, and then with Qatar Stars League club Al-Gharafa. Mr Bresciano made 84 appearances for Australia, scoring 13 goals. He played in three FIFA World Cups, two AFC Asian Cups and the 2004 OFC Nations Cup winning team.



MR JOSEPH CARROZZI

DIRECTOR

Mr Joseph Carrozzi was elected to the Football Australia Board in November 2018 and is Chair of Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and Congress Nominations Committee. Previously, Mr Carrozzi was a managing partner at PwC Australia and a member of the firm's National Leadership Team. Mr Carrozzi is a member of several boards, including Chair of Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Chair of the Centenary Institute for Medical Research, Deputy Chair of the NSW Institute of Sport and Board member of Western Sydney University. Mr Carrozzi is a Fellow of the Tax Institute of Australia (FTI) and Member of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws from the University of New South Wales and is admitted as a Barrister at Law in NSW.



MRS AMY DUGGAN

DIRECTOR

Mrs Amy Duggan was appointed to the Football Australia Board on 1 October 2019 and is also Chair of the Football Development Committee. Mrs Duggan has 25 years' experience in various roles in football and is a former Matilda. A communications professional, Mrs Duggan is a journalist and presenter for WIN Television and has worked in the media industry for 20 years. She is especially fond of the time she spent covering the CommBank Matildas, Subway Socceroos and A-League Women's competitions, and the FIFA Women's World Cups 2019 and 2023. Mrs Duggan holds a bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Wollongong and serves on several committees and sports boards.



FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



MRS HEATHER GARRIOCK

DIRECTOR

Mrs Heather Garriock was appointed to the Football Australia Board on 3 September 2021. She has spent over 25 years in football with various roles across all levels of the game and was a member of the inaugural Starting XI advisory panel.

Mrs Garriock is one of the most decorated CommBank Matildas in history, with appearances at three FIFA Women's World Cups, three AFC Women's Asian Cups, two Olympic Games and a national championship in the W-League.

With a master's in education (coaching) from Sydney University and an AFC A Licence, she has held coaching positions at National Premier Leagues, W-League and CommBank Matildas level, as well as an appointment as Vice-President of Football Coaches Australia. Mrs Garriock is the CEO of Australian Taekwondo, has been a television commentator and analyst for several broadcasters, and has held other sports management positions.



MR ANTER ISAAC

DIRECTOR

Mr Anter Isaac was elected to the Football Australia Board in November 2022. He is a former president of Football NSW, where he also served as a director between 2013 and 2021. Mr Isaac has been involved in Australian football since 1996 and has previously held the roles of Head of Finance, Company Secretary, National Soccer League and A-League Finance Manager, and various roles in National Teams management with the national governing body. He is also Managing Principal and CEO of consultancy firm Kleinmann Wang, which has worked with and supported significant sporting bodies including FIFA, the AFC, the Oceania Football Confederation, FIBA, and the International Cricket Council. Mr Isaac is an adjunct professor and lecturer with the AFC Academic Centre of Excellence. He also continues to serve on the Board of the Beverly Hills Film Festival and has previously served as a director of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs in the National Rugby League.



MS JACLYN LEE-JOE

DIRECTOR

Ms Lee-Joe has over 20 years of marketing, digital disruption and transformation experience across media, tech, communications and financial services. She has enjoyed working in numerous global and regional roles with some truly high-profile brands such as BBC, Netflix, Skype, Virgin and Afterpay.

As Global Director of Audience Marketing, Entertainment Partnerships and Broadcast Media, Ms Lee-Joe was responsible for Skype's campaign platforms, growing the entertainment partnership program and building Skype's capability and presence in the broadcast space.

At BBC Studios, Ms Lee-Joe had oversight of more than 300 brands globally, fostering franchise brands such as Doctor Who, The Planets series, Top Gear and growing new brands such as Bluey. Jackie was instrumental in helping to create new digital ways for communities to engage with BBC content globally.

At Netflix as Global Chief Marketing Officer, Ms Lee-Joe brought her experience in media and entertainment together with her understanding of product and tech – building reach and fan engagement for a growing international content slate across an expanding range of genres, deepening partnerships, leading popular culture by fostering conversations around the world, and developing Netflix's brand.

Since returning to Australia, she has been an adviser and board member to some of the leaders in the entrepreneur and innovation ecosystem. As Global Head of Customer, Content & Marketing @ Money by Afterpay, she led product design, content and marketing teams to create a new OTT money experience focused on Gen Z and Millennials.



FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA BOARD



MS CATRIONA NOBLE

DIRECTOR

Ms Catriona Noble was appointed to the Football Australia Board on 3 September 2021. Ms Noble is the Executive General Manager Retail at Australia Post and her career has seen her lead significant growth and major restructures at some of Australia's largest organisations, including ANZ Bank and McDonald's. During her time with ANZ, Ms Noble was responsible for key retail distribution channels to customers including the Australian Branch Network.

Ms Noble's 20-year career with McDonald's saw her play an integral role in the transformation of the McDonald's brand in Australia, holding various positions, including CEO and Managing Director for McDonald's Australia and Chair of Ronald McDonald House Charities. Ms Noble has completed the AMP (Advanced Management Programme) at INSEAD business school, Fontainebleau; an MBA in Strategy & Business at Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM); and the MIT Boston Digital Business Transformation Program. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



MR SPIRO PAPPAS

DIRECTOR

Mr Spiro Pappas is a senior executive with over 30 years of international business experience. He is currently Chairman of Atlas Iron, Open Learning (ASX listed) and OpenInvest. He is also non-executive director of DataMesh, and Cognian Technologies.

Prior to his current board roles, Mr Pappas had a long career in banking. He served at NAB in a number of senior leadership roles, including CEO of Asia (based in Singapore) and was responsible for all of NAB's International Operations and their Global Institutional Bank. Prior to NAB, Mr Pappas worked for Deutsche Bank in London and New York, and then with ABN AMRO Bank in London.

Mr Pappas has participated in a number of G20 forums as a member of the Australian B20 Taskforce. He was a corporate board member of the Australia Japan Business Cooperation Committee and the European Australian Business Council. Mr Pappas also served as part of an Australian Federal Government Digital Taskforce.



STUART CORBISHLEY

COMPANY SECRETARY

Mr Stuart Corbishley is an experienced sports and major events lawyer, company director and company secretary, who advises high-profile national and international governing bodies, major events, domestic leagues, clubs, athletes and sponsors on a range of legal, commercial, governance and integrity matters. Mr Corbishley's in-house experience across a wide range of sports and major events has given him a deep understanding of the sports industry and, having advised clients at every level of sport, he brings a unique perspective to his advice.

Mr Corbishley was General Counsel and Company Secretary for AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015™ and for Football Australia's successful bid for FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and Zealand 2023™, and has also acted as General Counsel and Company Secretary for Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games, Invictus Games Sydney 2018, and the 2022 UCI Road World Championships. Mr Corbishley has also advised Cricket Australia on the establishment of the Men's and Women's Big Bash League, Netball Australia on the establishment of the Super Netball League, Hockey Australia on the establishment of Hockey League One and Athletics Australia on the establishment of Nitro Athletics.

Currently, Mr Corbishley is a director of Triathlon Australia and also acts as Company Secretary for Invictus Australia and Netball NSW.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



JAMES JOHNSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER



ALEX DAVANI

HEAD OF CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICE AND
STRATEGY



MEL MALLAM

GENERAL COUNSEL



MARK FALVO

CHIEF OPERATING
OFFICER



SARAH WALSH

HEAD OF WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL, WOMEN'S
WORLD CUP LEGACY &
INCLUSION



PETER FILOPOULOS

HEAD OF MARKETING,
COMMUNICATIONS,
CORPORATE AFFAIRS



TOM RISCHBIETH

HEAD OF COMMERCIAL
AND EVENTS



PADDY STEINFORT

PERFORMANCE
DIRECTOR

UNTIL AUGUST 2023



JENNY SIMPSON

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY
OFFICER



WILL HASTIE

HEAD OF MEMBER
FEDERATION RELATIONS
AND COMMUNITY



ERNIE MERRICK

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NINA MCDONNELL

HEAD OF PEOPLE &
CULTURE



NATALIE LUTZ

HEAD OF PROFESSIONAL
FOOTBALL &
COMPETITIONS



NATHAN MAGILL

HEAD OF REFEREES



FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA WISHES TO THANK THE MEMBER FEDERATIONS, CLUBS & PARTNERS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED OUR GAME OVER THE PAST YEAR

MEMBER FEDERATIONS



A-LEAGUE MEN & A-LEAGUE WOMEN CLUBS



PARTNERS

