



**REGIONAL
ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION
of Australian Football
in Central Wheatbelt and
Great Northern
Country WA Leagues**

April 2011



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Sport and recreation has always been important to Australia and Australians as an integral part of lifestyle, a source of national pride, and a part of the country's culture. During the past few decades 'sport and recreation' has emerged as a full-scale industry within the Australian economy, making substantial employment and financial contributions in all regions and at all levels (local, state and national).
- Australian Football is one of the major sports in Australia and is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry. It is
 - Australia's premier spectator sport, attracting 15.1 million spectator attendances in 2010.
 - Australia's major football code in terms of regular participation with 751,015 participants in total.
 - An industry sector which supports 4,202 full time equivalent jobs (excluding players and umpires).
 - An industry sector which generated \$3.932 billion in financial contribution to the Australian economy in 2010.
- The annual economic contribution of local football in the Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern districts is equivalent to a sizable business and industry sub-sector. In 2010 it was estimated to be \$4.41 million:
 - \$1.90 million in Central Wheatbelt and
 - \$2.51 million in Great Northern.

Table E1 and Figure E1 summarise the economic contribution by type of activity.

- Australian Football is also an important part of the fabric of community life, no more significantly than in the heartland of country Western Australia Australian Football is the pre-eminent football code and winter sport. In hard economic times (such as periods of extended drought) the role of football is crucial in maintaining community spirit and providing an escape from business, work and family pressures. Indeed, interviews with people attending matches in Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern indicated that:
 - Providing an opportunity to socialise after football games is considered 'critical' or 'very important' by 95% of interviewed spectators at Central Wheatbelt matches and 75% of those interviewed at Great Northern matches.
 - 92% of interviewed Central Wheatbelt spectators believe local football is 'critical' or 'very important' in helping to give farming families a greater sense of being part of the local community.
 - 92% of interviewed Central Wheatbelt spectators also believe Local Football provides a 'critical' or 'very important' chance for people from out of town to interact/meet with people in this town and have a break from pressures of farm or business life.
- The Great Northern Football League (part of the Mid West Australian Football Region) appears to be sustainable; it has healthy levels of football participation and the region is growing. Conversely, the Central Wheatbelt Football League (part of the Wheatbelt Australian Football Region) has a modest a population base and has the lowest 'player to population' rates in Western Australia. However, the League is making a very important social and economic contribution.

Table E1: Regional Economic Contribution of Australian Football in the Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern Leagues

	Central Wheatbelt	Great Northern
Leagues and Clubs	\$577,934	\$623,192
Players	\$66,300	\$232,050
Spectators and Other Supporters	\$645,246	\$997,299
Visitors and Multiplier Effects	\$332,302	\$200,457
Volunteers	\$276,968	\$458,802
Total Regional Economic Contribution	\$1,898,749	\$2,511,800

Figure E.1: Distribution of Financial Contribution by Football Organisations, Participants and Businesses



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Australian Football is one of the largest sectors in the 'sport and recreation' industry; many key quantitative indicators support this proposition.

- (i) *Number of participants.* Australian Football ranks third in terms of 'registered' players among all Australian sports, according to annual figures supplied to the Australian Sports Commission.
- (ii) *Numbers of spectators.* Australian Football is the premier spectator sport in the country.
- (iii) *Employment.* A plethora of administrative, marketing, trades related, and catering jobs are directly created by Australian Football, and regular remuneration to players, coaches, trainers and other assistants has become accepted, even in small rural areas.
- (iv) *Expenditure Generated.* In 2010, there were 279 football leagues/associations, 2,536 Australian Football clubs and 12,373 club teams throughout Australia; each club is effectively a small business in its own right (although, of course, several are quite large businesses). As well, there were over 165,000 participants in Auskick and over 255,000 participants involved in regular school football competitions, and a growing number of Australian Football teams for women, girls and veterans.

All this football activity generates millions of dollars of income directly and has an economic flow-on effect to other sectors of industry. In many towns and regions football leagues and clubs are significant local 'businesses' and individual football 'events' such as grand finals and social functions are important economic stimuli in their own right.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

A range of data sources and survey instruments are used in the regular assessment of economic impact of Australian football. These include:

- Financial statements and/or income and expenditure records
- Occasional surveys of Australian Football clubs.
- Interviews with business managers in industries with direct links to Australian Football activity.
- Annual Football participation censuses
- Annual reports, study results, reports from surveys and other publications related to participation, financial details or employment in Australian Football.
- Tourism and Australian Bureau of Statistics publications

Estimates presented in this report have been entirely derived from the above sources and, from surveys conducted at football matches in Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern Football Leagues in 2010.

The accuracy of the estimates is dependent on the extent to which these sources are truly representative of Australian Football activities. The Australian Football League, the Central Wheatbelt Football League, the Great Northern Football League, nor Street Ryan and Associates Pty. Ltd., accept any responsibility for the accuracy of information or estimates presented, or for decisions taken as a result of material in this report.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

2.1 AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL WITHIN THE SPORT INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENT

Sport and recreation is a growth industry. The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census of Population and Housing recorded 75,155 persons whose main job was in a sports and physical recreation occupation, and this was a 23% increase on the number recorded in the 2001 Census.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation Survey¹ reported that nearly two-thirds of the Australian population aged 15 years and over (64% or 11.1 million people) reported that they had participated in sport and physical recreation at least once during the 12 months prior to interview in 2009–10. Over one-third (36%) of the population aged 15 years and over participated in one physical recreational activity, 17% participated in two activities, while less than 1% of persons participated in 6 or more activities.

In the 12 months to April 2009 there were approximately 2.7 million children aged 5 to 14 years in Australia². An estimated 63% (1.7 million children) had played a sport outside of school hours which had been organised by a school, club or association.

The average Australian household (in 2003-04) spent \$15.70 per week on sports and physical recreation products and services. Nearly half (48.2%) of the weekly expenditure on sports and physical recreation was on equipment and products (\$7.57 per week), and a further 44.7% was spent on sports and physical recreation services (\$7.02 per week), and sports and recreation vehicles accounted for the remaining 7.1% (\$1.11 per week). In total, \$6.333 billion was spent on the sports and physical recreation products and services³.

Australian Football is the nation's number one sporting entertainment and is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry.

The Australian Football League is unquestionably the most popular sporting competition in Australia.

- AFL attracted 7.4 million spectator attendances in 2010 (the sixth year in which there were more than 7 million spectators (and the fourth successive year); including 6.5 million spectator attendances at the home and away series.
- AFL spectator attendances in 2010 were almost double the second most attended spectator sport, the NRL with 3.8 million spectators.
- The average spectators at AFL home and away games during 2010 was 36,908 persons, substantially higher than both the averages and any club in the NRL, Soccer's A-League, Rugby Union's Super 14's and the NBL.
- AFL was the most popular spectator sport in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Geelong, Launceston, and Darwin in 2010.
- Among selected high profile team sports, AFL has the highest number of both actual players and participation numbers with 751,015 participants in 2010 (followed by Cricket, Federation Football, and Basketball).
- AFL has the highest rate of participation for males aged over 15 years of any team sport in South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, and is only exceeded by tennis in Victoria. Federation Football/Soccer has the highest rate of participation in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory.

¹ ABS (2011) Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation 2009-10

² ABS (2011) Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, 2009

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) Sport and Recreation: A Statistical Overview (Cat. 4156.0)

- An average of 2.64 million viewers per week watched AFL home and away games on free to air television in the 5 major cities in Australia in 2010, compared with 1.49 average viewers per week for the NRL.
- In September (and the first week of October) 2010, 34% of the total area of major metropolitan newspaper sports pages was devoted to AFL. This compared with 15% coverage of the next highest sport (NRL).

2.2 ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

2.2.1 National Contribution

Nationally, Australian Football is Australia’s premier sporting code and is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry. It

- Contributes \$3.93 billion to the Australian economy per annum. This economic contribution has increased at an average annual rate of 7.2%, over the past twelve years.
- Employs 11,526 people in 4,047 full time equivalent jobs
- Provides formal football competitions and programs (of at least six weeks duration) for 751,015.

The AFL is the most elite form of Australian Football, and the AFL and AFL Clubs provide leadership and support for development of the game at all levels. AFL Clubs are increasingly playing a role in supporting game development across Australia, including support for provincial, rural, and remote communities (including discrete Indigenous communities in Northern Australia).

The total financial contribution of Australian Football to the Australian economy in 2010 was estimated to be \$3.932 billion.

The State and Territory contributions in 2010 were:

-	Victoria	\$2.125 billion
-	Western Australia	\$0.566 billion
-	South Australia	\$0.548 billion
-	New South Wales/ACT	\$0.283 billion
-	Queensland	\$0.247 billion
-	Tasmania	\$0.111 billion
-	Northern Territory	\$0.049 billion.

2.2.1 Western Australian Contribution

The State of Western Australia is a heartland of Australian Football. The economic significance of Australian Football in this State is second only to Victoria and, in 2010, was estimated to be \$566.06 million, or 14.4% of the national economic contribution as summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Economic Contribution of Australian Football in Western Australia, 2010

	Peak Bodies and Leagues (\$000)	Clubs (\$000)	Players and Members (\$000)	Spectators and Other Supporters (\$000)	Business And Multiplier Effects (\$000)	Volunteer Labour (\$000)	Total (\$000)
Western Australia	103,346	124,414	123,710	59,857	121,444	33,291	566,063
Total Australia	662,210	942,446	743,130	409,464	952,268	222,025	3,931,541
%	15.61%	13.20%	16.65%	14.62%	12.75%	14.99%	14.40%

SOURCE: Street Ryan, Economic Impact of Australian Football 2010

2.3 FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION

2.3.1 National Participation

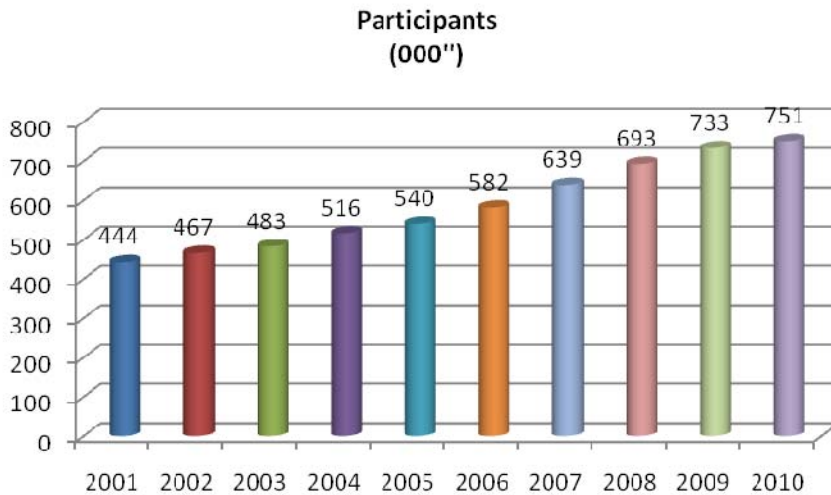
In 2010, total participation in Australian football programs and competitions of at least six weeks duration, in Australia⁴ was 751,015. Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1 summarise the growth in football participants since 2001.

Table 2.2 Growth in Football Participation 2001-10

	2001	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total Increase
Participants	443,890	482,867	516,043	581,839	638,828	693,052	732,803	751,015	307,125
% increase per annum	1.59%	3.48%	6.87%	7.84%	9.79%	8.49%	5.74%	2.49%	6.02%

SOURCE: Street Ryan, National Football Censuses 2001-10

Figure 2.1 Football Participation Growth 2001-10⁵



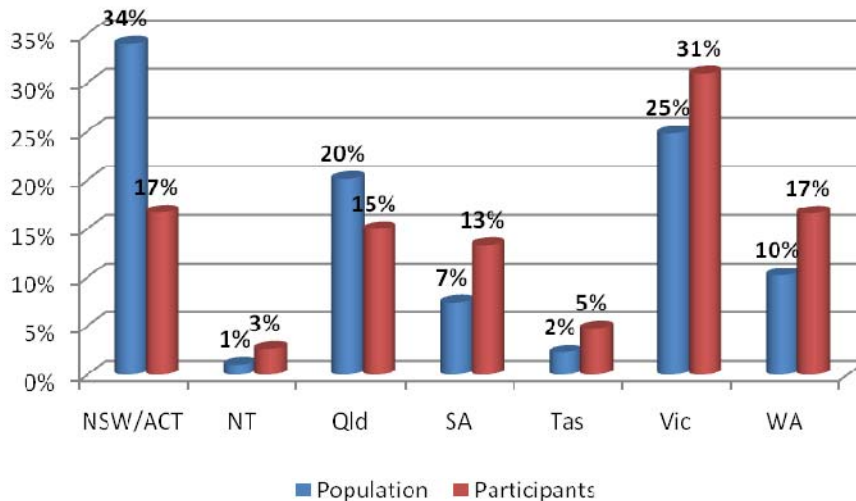
⁴ There were also 64,762 participants in international locations in 2010 not included in this assessment

⁵ It has been recognised in the Football Census for many years, that there are a substantial number of players who are involved in more than one structured football competition and program. These include club players who participate in school football, during the same season. They also include, Auskick participants who are involved in club and/or school competitions. There were 666,235 actual players in Australian Football competitions (of at least 6 weeks duration) and the NAB AFL Auskick Program in 2010. These player numbers, rather than total participants, are used in many of the relevant economic contribution estimates in this report.

The distribution of participation in Australian football is not proportional to the total population. It varies not only from State to State, but within States (for example metropolitan participation compared with country participation).

Figure 2.2 reveals that there is no clear relationship between football participation and total population, but it does show that Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania are the heartlands of Australian Football, accommodating 66% of participants (while these states have 45% of the resident population). There is also a high level of country participation. In 2010, country Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, had 25% of football participants and accommodated 13% of resident population.

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Australian Football Participants Compared with the Resident Population of Each State, 2010⁶



2.3.2 Western Australian Participation

The two country leagues assessed in this report are:

- Great Northern League, located in the Mid-West Australian Football Region, and
- Central Wheatbelt League, located in the Wheatbelt Football Region.

These two regions rank 14th and 16th, respectively, in terms of football participants, of the 17 Western Australian regions as shown in Table 2.3.

The “players to population” rates for males aged 5-39 years (the vast majority of football players) for the two regions accommodating Leagues in focus, compared with metropolitan and country Western Australia as a whole, are summarised in Table 2.4. This table indicates that

- The Mid-West Region has above average player to population rates across all age groups
- The Wheatbelt Region has below average player to population rates across the younger age groups. In fact it has the lowest rates of any Western Australian region.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Regional Population Estimates June 2009

Table 2.3: Western Australia: Football Participants by Region

METROPOLITAN	Club Participants				School Participants			Auskick	Veterans	Recreational	Women and Girls Club	TOTAL Participants
	Junior	Youth	Open	Total	Primary	Secondary	Dedicated Girls					
Claremont	1,575	925	1,000	3,500	2,010	1,740	270	2,010	125	192	75	9,922
East Fremantle	1,750	1,575	550	3,875	1,900	890	190	1,687	39	108	75	8,764
East Perth	1,425	875	650	2,950	2,165	1,115	80	1,254	59	72	100	7,795
Peel	1,900	1,400	575	3,875	1,710	1,495	175	1,671	207	0	50	9,183
Perth	1,275	1,050	1,150	3,475	2,330	1,575	290	2,061	182	0	100	10,013
South Fremantle	2,000	950	975	3,925	2,335	1,310	100	1,661	73	0	100	9,504
Subiaco	1,325	1,025	450	2,800	2,330	975	190	1,431	59	0	50	7,835
Swan Districts	1,925	1,125	775	3,825	3,275	1,035	125	1,292	70	0	250	9,872
West Perth	1,750	1,200	600	3,550	1,670	1,810	175	2,213	128	516	50	10,112
Sub Total	14,925	10,125	6,725	31,775	19,725	11,945	1,595	15,280	942	888	850	83,000
COUNTRY												
Goldfields	750	750	625	2,125	1,040	475	0	903	81	0	0	4,624
Great Southern	900	700	750	2,350	450	530	170	747	40	0	75	4,362
Kimberley	300	200	600	1,100	795	840	0	1,556		0	0	4,291
Midlands	1,175	525	1,275	2,975	475	800	0	1,294	69	36	0	5,649
Mid-West	725	775	450	1,950	800	425	50	728	108	204	75	4,340
Pilbara	675	400	500	1,575	60	175	0	810	200	0	0	2,820
South West	2,350	1,975	1,200	5,525	3,235	1,240	310	1,546	252	72	200	12,380
Wheatbelt	250	625	950	1,825	315	200	75	759		0	0	3,174
Sub Total	7,125	5,950	6,350	19,425	7,170	4,685	605	8,343	750	312	350	41,640
TOTAL	22,050	16,075	13,075	51,200	26,895	16,630	2,200	23,623	1,692	1,200	1,200	124,640

SOURCE: Street Ryan, National Football Census 2010

Table 2.4: Player to Population Rates, 2010

Region	5-12 years			13-18 years			19-39 years			5-39 years		
	Players	Population	Rate %	Players	Population	Rate %	Players	Population	Rate %	Players	Population	Rate %
Metropolitan Perth	39,695	95,317	41.65%	17,890	77,286	23.15%	8,454	260,421	3.25%	66,040	433,023	15.25%
Country WA	17,156	32,427	52.91%	7,106	21,983	32.32%	7,302	68,825	10.61%	31,563	123,235	25.61%
TOTAL WA	56,851	127,743	44.50%	24,996	99,269	25.18%	15,756	329,246	4.79%	97,603	556,258	17.55%
Mid-West	1,851	3,217	57.55%	775	1,934	40.07%	684	5,469	12.51%	3,310	10,620	31.17%
Wheatbelt	1,110	10,001	11.09%	625	7,655	8.17%	950	19,653	4.83%	2,685	37,308	7.20%

Note: Regional populations by age group sourced from the ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006 and adjusted for ABS estimated resident populations, 2009.
SOURCE: Street Ryan, National Football Census 2010

3. ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF FOOTBALL IN THE CENTRAL WHEATBELT AND GREATER NORTHERN LEAGUES

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE LEAGUES

3.1.1 Central Wheatbelt

The Wheatbelt's economy has historically been based on agriculture, particularly cropping, which remains the most dominant industry in the region. Mining, commerce, manufacturing, construction, fishing and tourism industries also make notable contributions to the broader regional economy. The Department of Local Government and Regional Development estimated that the Wheatbelt's Gross Regional Product is around \$3.7 billion (indicative only) and this represents 3.7% of the Gross State Product.

The Central Wheatbelt Football League is an a sparsely populated part of the State. The four local government areas in the League accommodate a total of less than 2,000 residents.

Clubs in the Central Wheatbelt Football League encompass towns in the local government areas of

- Mount Marshall Shire which has a resident population of 672 persons. The Shire's population has been increasing at an average annual rate of 0.1% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes two Central Wheatbelt Football Clubs: Bencubbin and Beacon.
- Nungarin Shire which has a resident population of 257 persons. The Shire's population has been decreasing at an average annual rate of 1.2% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes the Central Wheatbelt Football Club of Nungarin.
- Mukinbudin Shire which has a resident population of 578 persons. The Shire's population has been decreasing at an average annual rate of 3.4% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes two Central Wheatbelt Football Clubs: Mukinbuddin and Kalannie.
- Koorda Shire which has a resident population of 471 persons. The Shire's population has been decreasing at an average annual rate of 0.8% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes the Central Wheatbelt Football Club of Koorda.

3.1.2 Great Northern

The City of Geraldton/Greenough's population is the major population centre in both the Great Northern League and the broader Mid West Region (with more than 67% of the Mid West regional population). Unlike the Wheatbelt, there has been substantial population growth in Great Northern. Many of the farming areas have recorded decreases in population, largely as a result of farm amalgamation. The population of inland Shires in the Mid West, where mining is a major industry, have experienced economic growth but this has not necessarily led to population growth since the tendency for using 'fly-in/fly-out' workforces have become established.

There are four local government areas in the Great Northern Football League, accommodating more than 42,000 residents (over 20 times more than the Wheatbelt). Clubs in the Great Northern Football League encompass towns in the local government areas of:

- City of Geraldton/Greenough which has a resident population of 36,887 persons. The City's population has been increasing at an average annual rate of 2.1% over the five years 2003 to 2008. The City includes four of the Great Northern Football Clubs: Railways, Rovers, Towns and Brigades.

- Chapman Valley which has a resident population of 1,049 persons. The Shire's population has been increasing at an average annual rate of 3.9% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes the Great Northern Football Club of Chapman Valley.
- Mullewa Shire which has a resident population of 883 persons. The Shire's population has been decreasing at an average annual rate of 4.2% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes the Great Northern Football Club of Mullewa.
- Northampton Shire which has a resident population of 3,650 persons. The Shire's population has been increasing at an average annual rate of 0.8% over the five years 2003 to 2008. This Shire includes the Great Northern Football Club of Northampton.

3.2 LEAGUE, CLUB AND PLAYER EXPENDITURE

As part of the annual assessment of Australian Football economic impact across Australia, a wide range of financial statements are collected each year. These are supplemented by a number of in-house reports and results of several studies. The level of detail varies enormously, with some organisations providing only expenditure totals or a very broad breakdown of types of expenditure. For the Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern assessment, details of financial performance were provided for 50% of the Clubs.

Estimates of detailed expenditures by the leagues and clubs in Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern are presented in Table 3.1. There are a few points which provide clarification to the estimates in these tables.

- (i) Some football clubs are, more broadly, "sporting clubs", with activities in other sports (cricket, netball, hockey, etc). In some cases it is not possible to separate the expenditure associated with these different activities, and exclude them from the football impact calculations.
- (ii) Due to the inconsistency in reporting financial details by clubs and leagues, it has not been possible to define entirely mutually exclusive expenditure categories. This means that some expenditure categories may include different items from organisation to organisation.
- (iii) Only 'recurrent' or operating expenditure items are included in the tables. Fixed asset items are long-term investments and would distort the estimates if they were included. Depreciation of fixed assets is included in the estimates where it has been included in financial statements.

Key features of Table 3.1 are:

- ♦ Expenditure on matches, social functions and fundraising makes up 55% of all expenditure by clubs and leagues.
- ♦ Coaching, training, umpire, medical and merchandise and equipment make up 20% expenses.

Expenditure by players in the two leagues is estimated to be:

- \$66,300 in Central Wheatbelt
- \$232,050 in Great Northern.

Table 3.1 Estimated Expenditure by Leagues and Clubs in Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern

	Central Wheatbelt	Great Northern
Advertising/Marketing (including sponsorships)	\$13,781	\$14,860
Accounting, Professional and Bank Fees & Interest	\$51,602	\$55,643
Match Expenses and Player Payments	\$162,325	\$175,037
Coaching/Training/Umpires/Medical Staff Payments	\$61,203	\$65,996
Affiliation/Transfer Fees/Grants and Insurances	\$27,970	\$30,160
Social Functions/Clubs/Fundraising	\$153,983	\$166,041
Utilities/Postage/Printing/Stationery/ Telephone/IT	\$17,774	\$19,165
Salaries/Wages/Honorariums and On-Costs	\$7,726	\$8,331
Merchandise/Uniforms/Training/ Medical Equipment	\$52,027	\$56,101
Rates, Rent, Repairs and Maintenance (including grounds)	\$11,860	\$12,789
Trophies and Prizes	\$5,988	\$6,457
Plant & Equipment Hire	\$3,495	\$3,768
Other Expenses	\$8,200	\$8,843
Total	\$577,934	\$623,192

Notes: *The expenditure categories are divided into the greatest detail possible to provide consistent groupings. Because financial reporting by leagues and clubs is not uniform, some expenditure categories may include different items from organisation to organisation.

** Some clubs reported payments to "players and coaches" in the same expenditure item. Where this has occurred the total amount has been recorded as "player payments".

SOURCE: Street Ryan estimates from a sample of financial statements from football organisations.

3.3 EXPENDITURE AT FOOTBALL GAMES

The football season in 2010 in the Central Wheatbelt League involved 16 rounds of home and away games and three finals rounds (semi-finals, final and grand final) or 52 matches in total. This league involved senior teams only.

In 2010 the Great Northern League had 17 rounds of home and away games and three finals rounds (semi-finals, final and grand final). This league involved senior, second grade and colts.

A total of 249 interviews were conducted with people attending 9 games in the two leagues and these interviews were used as a basis for calculating both:

- Expenditure at games throughout the season
- Expenditure by visitors to the host towns (during their visit; at the football and in the commercial area of the town).

Table 3.2 presents the estimates of the economic contribution that the football competitions make to their respective regions through games, in terms of expenditure by members, players and spectators. The results indicate:

- Total direct game expenditure (including related social functions) over the season was an estimated \$645,246 in Central Wheatbelt and \$803,097 in Great Northern. The road travel costs are considerably higher in Central Wheatbelt since all games involve considerable distances for the away team and their supporters, whereas many Great Northern games are staged between Geraldton teams, and the distances to non-Geraldton based teams are less, on average, than the distances in the Central Wheatbelt. The survey of spectators and members at 2010 games revealed that the average distances travelled to games was
 - Central Wheatbelt: 77 kilometres
 - Great Northern: 8 kilometres.

Food and beverage and gate/admissions expenditure were proportionately higher over the Great Northern season.

- Other local expenditure includes visitor expenditure by people supporting or associated with away teams. This expenditure was also higher in Central Wheatbelt due to the frequency of visiting teams attending matches, despite the fact that Geraldton (and to a lesser extent Northampton) offers a much larger central business district than than any of the Wheatbelt towns.

Table 3.2 Football Game Expenditure

	Central Wheatbelt	Great Northern
Direct Game Expenditure		
Road Travel Costs ⁷	\$161,785	\$56,864
Gate/Admissions	\$62,485	\$171,579
Food at Game	\$195,331	\$343,045
Raffles/Donations	\$20,432	\$23,519
Beverages	\$178,985	\$402,292
Other	\$26,227	\$0
Total	\$645,246	\$997,299
Other Local Expenditure by Visitors		
Snacks and Meals	\$79,993	\$59,353
Grocery/Retail Purchases	\$5,914	\$16,720
Newsagency/Magazines	\$2,218	\$2,915
Health Care	\$5,175	\$6,980
Local Fuel Purchases	\$48,396	\$17,309
All Other	\$3,697	\$21,200
Total	\$145,393	\$124,477
Calculated Multiplier	1.515	1.201
Total Direct and Indirect Expenditure	\$977,547	\$1,197,756

⁷ Based conservatively on running costs of 15.5 cents/kilometre not total vehicle costs (of 78.8 cents per kilometre) derived from average medium vehicle costs supplied by the Royal Automobile Club of WA.

3.4 VOLUNTEERS

Until the 1970's, the sport and recreation industry in Australia was largely the domain of the voluntary sector. However, the ever increasing commercialisation of many (but not all) tiers of sport, the need for professionalism, and the greater social acceptance of sport and recreation as legitimate business activities, have appeared to change the nature of voluntary input to sport. In reality these changes have occurred in the upper echelons of sport. Australian Football League clubs, and other prominent leagues and clubs (in capital cities and provincial centres) now employ many administrators, health specialists, technical staff, and other sports professionals in order to keep up with competitive factors and commercial demands.

However, in small, local football organisations and junior leagues and clubs the voluntary sector continues to thrive and football is enhanced by this voluntary input. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that, in 2006, there were 1.7 million people working as volunteers in sport and physical recreation organisations in Australia. Over half of these volunteers (54% or 925,900) were involved in coaching, umpiring or judging. There were also high proportions of sport and physical recreation volunteers involved in administrative and clerical roles (37%) or management and committee work (32%)⁸.

The number of voluntary workers in Central Goldfields and Great Northern Football Leagues in 2010 has been calculated from a survey of the football clubs is summarised in Table 3.3. The total estimated number of volunteers in 2010 was 462 persons, providing 40,030 hours of voluntary input.

Estimating the equivalent financial contribution of voluntary workers generally results in a conservative value being placed on volunteer labour; a consequence of several factors. For example

- in many cases the output of a voluntary worker is not equal to a paid worker (although it is generally true that output even among paid workers is seldom 'equal')
- it is difficult to achieve perceived or real accountability among workers who are not paid
- voluntary positions are not necessarily filled by either the best available people, or even people with the skills to effectively undertake the work. If someone is offering their time freely it is difficult to complain about the standard. From the volunteer worker's point of view, the job is often taken as part of a commitment to the game/organisation or pressure from other club members to contribute, and it cannot be expected to be the highest priority at all times.

With these limiting factors understood, an hourly contribution of \$18.38 has been calculated for 2010. Therefore the equivalent labour contribution by 462 volunteers is \$735,770.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) Sport and Recreation, A Statistical Overview, Australia (Cat. 4156)

Table 3.3 Volunteers in Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern

	Boards and Committee	Coaches Trainers	Team Managers/ Assistants	Record Keeping	Medical	Social/ Canteen	Other	TOTAL
Number of Volunteers								
Central Wheatbelt	51	28	25	24	5	39	13	185
Great Northern	65	51	65	27	13	44	11	277
Average Hours	99	125	121	60	60	25	60	80
Total Hours								
Central Wheatbelt	5,049	3,500	3,025	1,440	300	975	780	15,069
Great Northern	6,447	6,417	7,905	1,629	802	1,100	662	24,962

4. SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF FOOTBALL IN THE CENTRAL WHEATBELT AND GREATER NORTHERN LEAGUES

Australian Football is an important part of the fabric of community life throughout Australia, and even more significantly in its heartland states of Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania where Australian Football is the pre-eminent football code. In hard economic times (such as periods of extended drought, or times when communities are impacted by crises or disasters from fire, flood or economic downturns) the role of football and other sport and recreation activities is crucial in maintaining community spirit and in providing an escape from business, work and family pressures.

Attendees at football matches in Central Wheatbelt and Great Northern were asked a range of questions about the social importance of football to them and their communities, such as:

- To what extent does Local Football provide a chance for people and their families to have a social meal out or to socialise after the game?
- To what extent does Local Football provide a chance for people from out of town to combine a trip to the football with shopping (perhaps instead of shopping in a bigger town)?
- To what extent does Local Football help to give farming families a greater sense of being part of the local community?
- To what extent does Local Football provide a chance for people from out of town to interact/meet with people in this town and have a break from pressures of farm or business life?

The results of the responses to these questions are presented in Figures 4.1 to 4.4, and reveal:

- Providing an opportunity to socialise after football games is considered 'critical' or 'very important' by 95% of interviewed spectators at Central Wheatbelt matches and 75% of those interviewed at Great Northern matches.
- The chance to combine a trip to the football with shopping or other business in towns is not rated highly by spectators interviewed.
- 92% of interviewed Central Wheatbelt spectators believe local football is 'critical' or 'very important' in helping to give farming families a greater sense of being part of the local community, compared with 50% in Great Northern (where a smaller proportion of households are farming families).
- 92% of interviewed Central Wheatbelt spectators also believe Local Football provides a 'critical' or 'very important' chance for people from out of town to interact/meet with people in this town and have a break from pressures of farm or business life compared with 37% in Great Northern.

Figure 4.1 Extent to which Local Football provides a chance for people and their families to have a social meal out or to socialise after the game

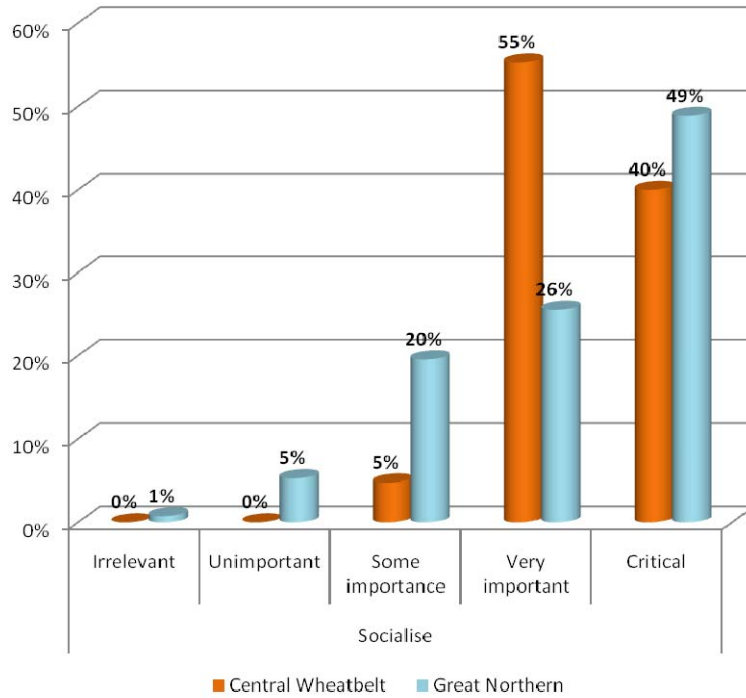


Figure 4.2 Extent to which Local Football provides a chance for people from out of town to combine a trip to the football with shopping (perhaps instead of shopping in a bigger town)

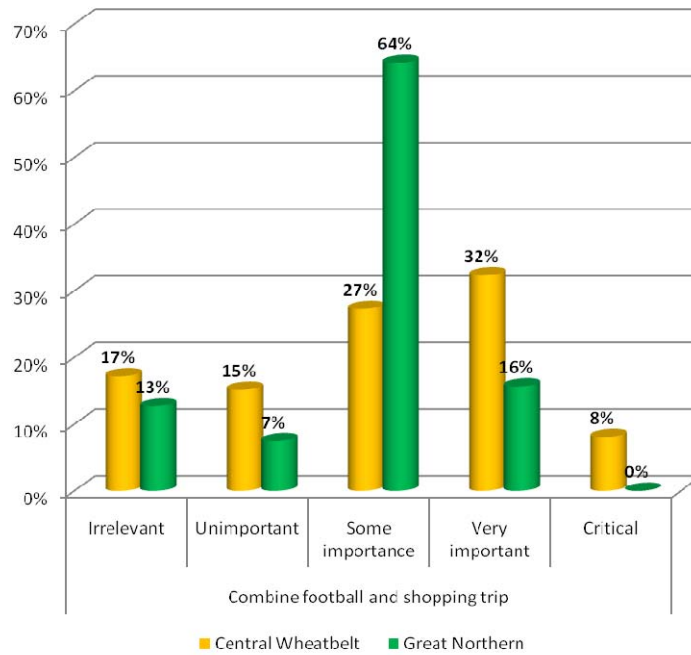


Figure 4.3 Extent to which Local Football provides a chance for people from out of town to interact/meet with people in this town and have a break from pressures of farm or business life

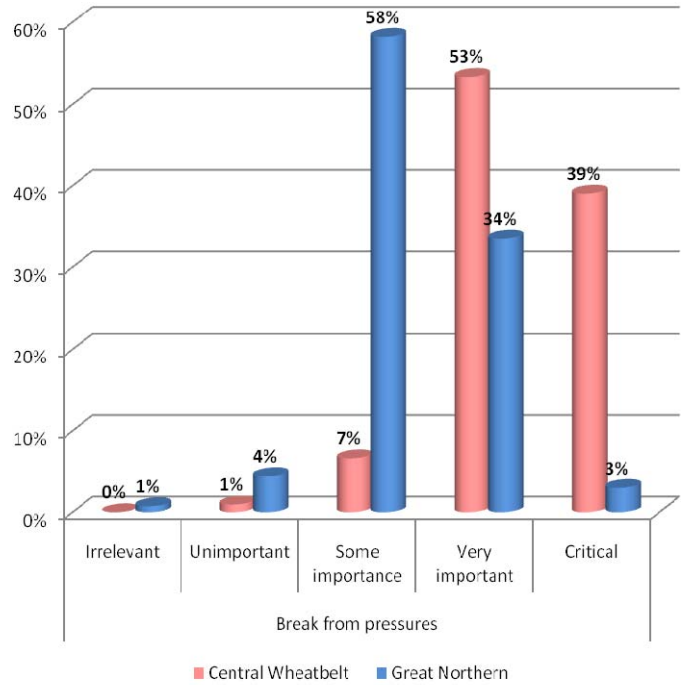
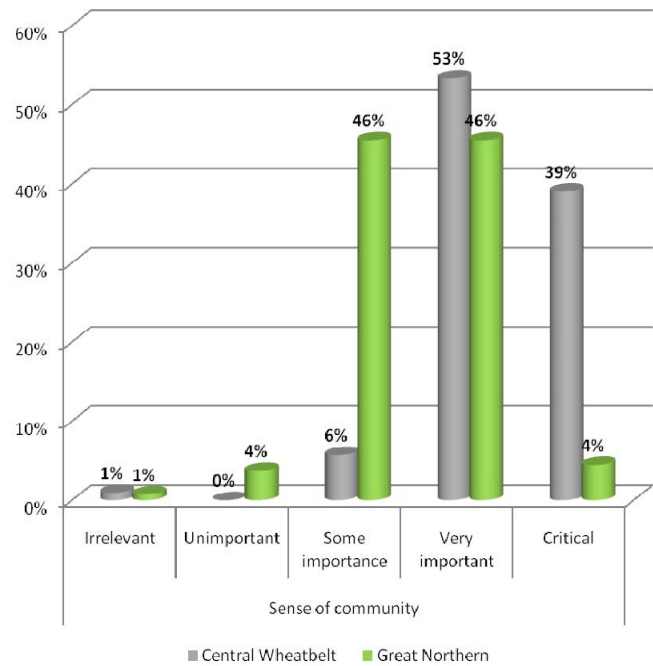


Figure 4.4 Extent to which Local Football helps to give farming families a greater sense of being part of the local community



Additional comments provided by spectators on social and community aspects of local football included⁹:

- Very important to social side of community
- Critically important for the well being and sustainability of our town
- A very important part of the social/sport of Wheatbelt: Must never fold up!
- Great impact from hockey and netball as well
- Weekend football/netball/hockey is a unique opportunity for all the community to socialise at one place
- We should never have to face life without it, but, would like to encourage and additional balance with the arts (on the same day)
- Football provides significant potential for country people to participate in a "major" sport. The AFL would do well to support its country roots financially as the benefits would flow through the entire community.
- A good day's outing and socialising. Keep it up.
- Helps the economies of the towns involved.
- The importance of hockey and netball should not be underestimated.
- It's a great day
- It's brilliant for towns and social life
- It's great for the towns
- It's great for the country towns
- Football is a great way for people to keep in touch and get away from the farm for the day
- If footy dies the town dies
- Absolutely vital part of the community make up
- Without football the town becomes less attractive to potential new residents and no other winter sports including jnrs will survive
- Football is critical to the survival of all other winter sports and community recreation participation and facilities without footy and winter sports our communities will be in jeopardy
- Whole social winter community focus-without a footy team our town communities would suffer
- If we lose our football team, many other businesses would suffer financially and more than likely close
- Football and winter sport is vitally important to small rural communities and keeps our community and others connected especially through drier seasons
- Excellent that the same towns play all sports in the same place on the same day
- As a member and secretary of the football club people do put a lot of money into their local football because it keeps our town alive- would be nice to be given a lot more grants for the volunteers who help out
- Great concept-The Saturday fixture of football senior and junior, hockey- senior and junior and netball senior and junior means almost everyone in the district has a relative taking part. We must keep this going.
- Football and other winter sports are critical parts of living in the Central Wheatbelt
- Must keep country football alive
- Keeps the community together
- Helps integrate regional communities
- Towns will die if there is no footy
- It's extremely important to keep our league going for social infrastructure and opportunity for young members of community to play sport

⁹ Comments are provided verbatim

- It would be a great social loss if it didn't happen
- Like any country football league it is vital for the community. I hope that the game in all country leagues will prosper and survive for many years
- Essential
- Very important for families of little kids
- Regionally supported by other sports/genders
- Great opportunity for city and country interaction
- My son has benefited as a Perth based player both financially and socially
- Healthier environment than in a pub for young people to meet up, socialise by combining sports
- Government tax increases fuel prices will play a big influence on attendance numbers particularly the elderly, low socio economic
- Particularly in rough seasons on farms in the district it gives us a chance to spend time away from the farm and talk to other people
- Brings community together, relieves stress from working week as well as taking mind off work
- Football is important to our community
- Incredibly important for sport for juniors to be fostered and encourages to build senior teams of the future
- Gives people the opportunity to get away from day to day stress and hardships
- The whole family plays a winter sport of some type and is the only place to go out in Nungarin
- The need for people to be able to socialise in the bush is very important towards family life
- As a family coming to footy it is a big expense. Gate fees need to be lower.
- Sport is vital for retaining young people in town
- Gives us something to do
- Gate price too high.