



**WEST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COMMISSION RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT: MORE THAN JUST A GAME; THE USE OF STATE FUNDS BY THE WA FOOTBALL COMMISSION**

The West Australian Football Commission has provided a detailed response and update to the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries on the Public Accounts Committee Report released on 12 November 2020. It should be noted that the WAFC Chair and CEO have met with the Hon Dr Tony Buti Minister for Finance; Lands; Sport and Recreation; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests and WAFC Executive Managers have met with DLGSC staff to discuss the contents of the Report and the 23 Recommendations provided by the Public Accounts Committee.

The Commission will continue to work with the Hon Dr Tony Buti Minister for Finance; Lands; Sport and Recreation; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests and DLGSC on implementing the supported recommendations through our vision of connecting and enhancing WA communities through our great game.

To provide a summary of our initial response to the 23 Recommendations please see the below table:

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>WAFC Response</i></b>
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>To deliver the greatest accountability and assurance to Parliament and the public, the Minister for Sport and Recreation (the Minister) and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), as the State’s representatives in the major football funding agreement, should work closely with the WA Football Commission (WAFC) to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in this report.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and is committed to working with DLGSC and supplying the relevant information required under the WAFC Funding Agreement.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>The WAFC should continue to provide oversight and governance to football in WA.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation as it aligns to our objectives stated in the WAFC Constitution and is the main reason the commission was established in 1989.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>The WAFC should make concerted efforts to educate its staff and Commissioners on the propriety of public pronouncements and at all times behaving ethically and with full recognition of the limitations inherent in their role as Commissioners.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and has policies and processes in place to educate staff and Commissioners about their code of conduct.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>The Minister should require more transparent reporting by the WAFC, to increase its accountability to its stakeholders. This should include at the minimum more openness about its staffing, including the numbers of employees, their broad employment</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and has provided information requested by DLGSC for all reporting requirements and will continue to provide the information which is required under our funding agreements and remains in line with DLGSC typical reporting practices.</p>

<p>areas and the overall cost of their salaries and benefits.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>The DLGSC should work with WAFC to develop mechanisms to track, monitor, and report on how the appropriate resources are being secured to support the continued growth in all aspects of women’s involvement in football.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and our commitment to growing Women’s football is recognised in our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 as a key strategy within the Engagement Pillar. The WAFC Revised Strategy 2021-2022 highlights the importance of Women’s involvement in football through a strategy and KPI in the Engagement Pillar and a dedicated KPI within the Sustainability Pillar attributed to director positions on football Boards.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p>The Minister and the DLGSC should work with the WAFC to explore options to further improve and support junior and youth football development and participation. This includes looking at other ways to work with local clubs and schools in developing strong competitions.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and our commitment to growing junior and youth football is recognised in our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 as a key strategy within the Engagement Pillar. The Revised Strategy 2021-2022 references Youth Football in strategies and KPI’s within the Engagement Pillar.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>The Minister and the DLGSC should work with the WAFC to explore ways to develop and increase participation in country football. Measures should be put in place to track and report on progress.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and our commitment to growing regional football participation is recognised in our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 as a key strategy within in the Engagement Pillar. The Revised Strategy 2021-2022 highlights Country Football within the Engagement Pillar as a strategy with relevant KPI’s.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p>The Minister and the DLGSC should work with the WAFC to ensure adequate measures for further supporting Indigenous football are in place as a future priority for the WAFC. These measures should be tracked and monitored for progress, and periodically reported on.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and our commitment to growing Indigenous football participation is recognised in our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 as a key strategy within the Engagement Pillar.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p> <p>That the Minister and the DLGSC should work with the WAFC to ensure there is continued investment to support expansion of programs promoting all-abilities football.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and our commitment to growing all-abilities football is recognised in our Strategic Plan 2017-2021 as a key strategy within the Engagement Pillar.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p>	<p>The WAFC supports the recommendation which is aligned to the Revised Strategy 2021-2022 with the</p>

<p>The WAFC should increase its support to WAFL clubs to assist them repurpose towards community engagement.</p>	<p>goal WAFL Sustainability and Alignment within the Sustainability Pillar.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11</b></p> <p>The Minister for Sport and Recreation and the Minister of Education and Training should work together to maximise the opportunities for public school footballers to reach their full sporting potential, including looking at resource allocations. In doing so, they should also work with the WAFC to determine the most effective ways in which it can assist.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and encourages the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister of Education and Training to consult with the WAFC on initiatives to improve opportunities for all children to participate in football programs within their school environment.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12</b></p> <p>The WAFC should provide mechanisms to ensure that the WAFL continues to be, and remains sustainable as, the premier State competition.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and understands the relevance and importance of the WAFL as stated in Objective (c) in the WAFC Constitution.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 13</b></p> <p>That the WAFC coordinate with member and Affiliate clubs and leagues to devolve its service and delivery functions to the appropriate stakeholder. As part of this, the WAFC should work with the WAFL clubs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More fully involve them in talent and junior development, in order to strengthen WAFL clubs' connection with their communities.</li> <li>• Shift control of the Colts competition back to the WAFL clubs.</li> </ul>	<p>The WAFC supports the recommendation's reference to coordinate with members, Affiliate clubs and leagues to determine services and functions the WAFC provides to each stakeholder.</p> <p>The shift of talent programs and the Colts team has been completed with successful transition to the WAFL Clubs. The WAFC has developed a participation model for football which is based on best practice within the sports industry which is evidenced by the positive sustained growth of football participation numbers over the last ten years, with the exception of 2020 due to the Global COVID-19 Pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 14</b></p> <p>That the Minister and the DLGSC monitor the WAFC's responses to the recommendations. If they deem the action taken by the WAFC to be insufficient, the Minister and the DLGSC should reconsider funding arrangements (both the 10-year term under the WAFC Funding Agreement, and the other funding available to the WAFC as a State Sporting Association).</p>	<p>WAFC has no response in regard to Recommendation 14 as the recommendation is directed at the Minister for Sport and DLGSC.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15</b></p>	<p>WAFC supports player welfare, however this requires further consideration and discussions to occur between</p>

<p>To ensure greater player welfare and support, the DLGSC should work with the WAFC to develop rigorous mechanisms to track and report on the development of draftees throughout their careers and gather data on the number of players who drop out of football, especially the AFL, and the reasons for this.</p>	<p>stakeholders currently involved in football pathways before providing a final opinion on whether the recommendation is supported</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16</b></p> <p>The DLGSC and WAFC should work together to arrive at a more appropriate older drafting age to promote to the AFL, recognising the benefits of allowing draftees greater development as individuals rather than merely as footballers.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and will continue to advocate to the AFL on a more appropriate draft age.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 17</b></p> <p>The WAFC Constitution should be amended so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioners cannot be members of the WAFC.</li> <li>• Affiliates become members of the WAFC.</li> </ul>	<p>WAFC notes the release of the Carson Report and independent review of the WAFC Constitution. In regard to recommendation 17 the Commission has made the following statement: The WA Football Commission supports the proposed increased voting rights for Community Football; specifically, the recommendation that the WAFC cede half its voting rights in the election of Commissioners (10% of the total vote) to Community Football. The commission refers to The Carson report which provides context and outlines the reasons Jon Carson has recommended it is important for Commissioners to remain as Ordinary members of the WAFC. This is specifically detailed on page 10 of the report.</p> <p>The Commission notes that it does not have the ability to amend the WAFC Constitution, which is a matter for the nine WAFL and two AFL Clubs as Nominee Members of WAFC.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 18</b></p> <p>The WAFC should reform the board’s nomination and election processes to ensure it more fully represents the various stakeholders and the wider football community, including the need for greater representation from the various Affiliates. Suggested reforms include:</p>	<p>WAFC refers to the Carson Report which addresses the key points raised in Recommendation 18, including the importance of the Commissioners being involved in the process of appointing new Commissioners.</p> <p>There are term limits on WAFC Board appointments.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing Commissioners should have no role to play in appointing new Commissioners.</li> <li>• There should be term limits on WAFC board appointments.</li> <li>• Employees of WAFC, the two AFL Clubs, and the WAFL clubs and Affiliates should not be able to be appointed as Commissioners.</li> </ul>	<p>The WAFC is not aware of any occasion upon which an employee of the AFL Clubs, WAFL Clubs or affiliates has been appointed as a Commissioner, but sees no disadvantage in a Constitutional amendment which would prevent that from occurring.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 19</b></p> <p>Any appointed Commissioner, while they may be a 'representative' of the 'body' that nominated them, must operate with full cognisance that they have an obligation to make decisions in the interest of football in WA. To facilitate this, all incoming Commissioners should receive appropriate board training.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and is comfortable that the Commissioner Induction process currently implemented will continue to address Recommendation 19.</p> <p>The Commission notes that an entity does not nominate candidates for the Commission, an individual self nominates to be a Commissioner and follows the election process outlined in the WAFC Constitution.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 20</b></p> <p>That the Minister and the DLGSC monitor the WAFC's responses to all recommendations directed at the WAFC. If they deem the WAFC's responses to be insufficient, the Minister and the DLGSC should reconsider funding arrangements.</p>	<p>As the recommendation is directed at the Minister and DLGSC, WAFC has no formal response.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 21</b></p> <p>The Minister should ensure that the DLGSC tests the quality and impact of WAFC reporting. This should include a focus on WAFC analysis of player wellbeing.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation for DLGSC to test the quality and impact of WAFC's reporting. The WAFC supports player welfare, however this requires further consideration and discussions to occur between stakeholders currently involved in football pathways before providing a final opinion on whether the recommendation is supported in its entirety, given the logistical and resourcing issues involved with broad scale analysis of the wellbeing of all who play football.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 22</b></p> <p>The Minister and the DLGSC should work with the WAFC to ensure there is greater clarity about the impact and effectiveness of expenditure allocated to the WAFL and other parts of the football ecosystem.</p>	<p>WAFC supports the recommendation and will continue to supply the financial information required under our funding agreements.</p>



**Recommendation 23**

The Minister should work with the WAFC to ensure that reported participation and membership figures are accurate and explicable.

WAFC supports the recommendation and will continue to supply accurate data included in our reports as required under the Commission's funding agreements.