



Professional Footballers

Australia (PFA)

# W-League Workplace Conditions Report 2016



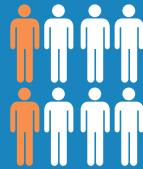


# Supporting the Players Building the Game

# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## What you need to know

- **85%**   
of players **earn less than \$5,000** for the season



25% of players **earn under \$500 for the whole season**



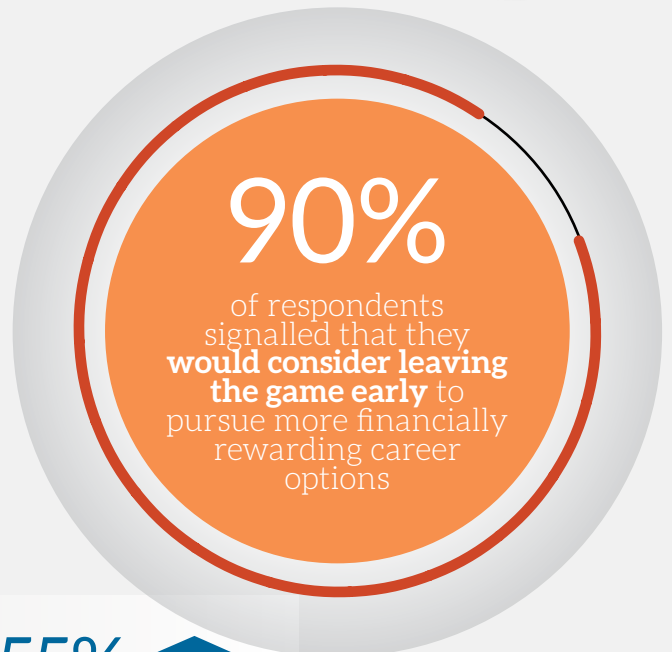
- **60%**  
of players find the **travel arrangements provided by their W-League club not conducive to an elite environment**



**85%**  
of players feel some form of **stress on their relationship with their employer** when getting time off work for football commitments



- **82%**  
of players indicated that their **playing and training facilities were substandard**



**over 55%** 

Outside of their football commitments, **over 55% of respondents work or study more than 20 hours per week**

**W-League players' average weekly workload is 24 hours**

“ In Australia the other codes are making great headway, and internationally more nations are putting the necessary resources behind women’s football. If we don’t act and really back the W-League, Australian football will be left behind ”

*current W-League player.*

# 2 ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PFA conducted the survey with the primary objective of gaining a clear understanding of the working conditions of W-League players, including:

- the career path
- player payments
- player development and wellbeing
- workload (hours of work)
- workplace standards & conditions
- the state of the women's game

111 players from the 9 W-League clubs completed the survey, of which 13 were international players and 80% were under the age of 25. The survey included 86 questions covering the following areas:

- Demographics
- The W-League
- Financial Remuneration
- The PFA
- Life outside football
- Workload and working conditions
- Football Federation Australia

The number of respondents equated to a return rate of 63% of W-League players.

## Study Background

Established in 2008, the W-League is Australia's elite domestic women's football competition. There are currently few workplace protections in place regarding their participation in the W-League. The survey reinforces the:

- short-term and precarious nature of W-League careers;
- high workforce turnover; and
- the existence of few minimum workplace standards.

The findings of the report highlight the need to establish a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) to provide all players with basic workplace rights and protections.

# 3 A PROFESSIONAL CAREER PATH

60%

of W-League players have represented either the Matildas or Young Matildas

This highlights the important role the W-League plays in:

- sustaining the international

competitiveness of the Matildas; and

- identifying our next Matildas.

10%

of players had entered into a W-League contract longer than 1 season during their careers

70%

of players have been involved in the W-League for more than 2 years

85%

of players indicated they would consider leaving the game (retiring) if the following workplace standards and conditions were not put in place:

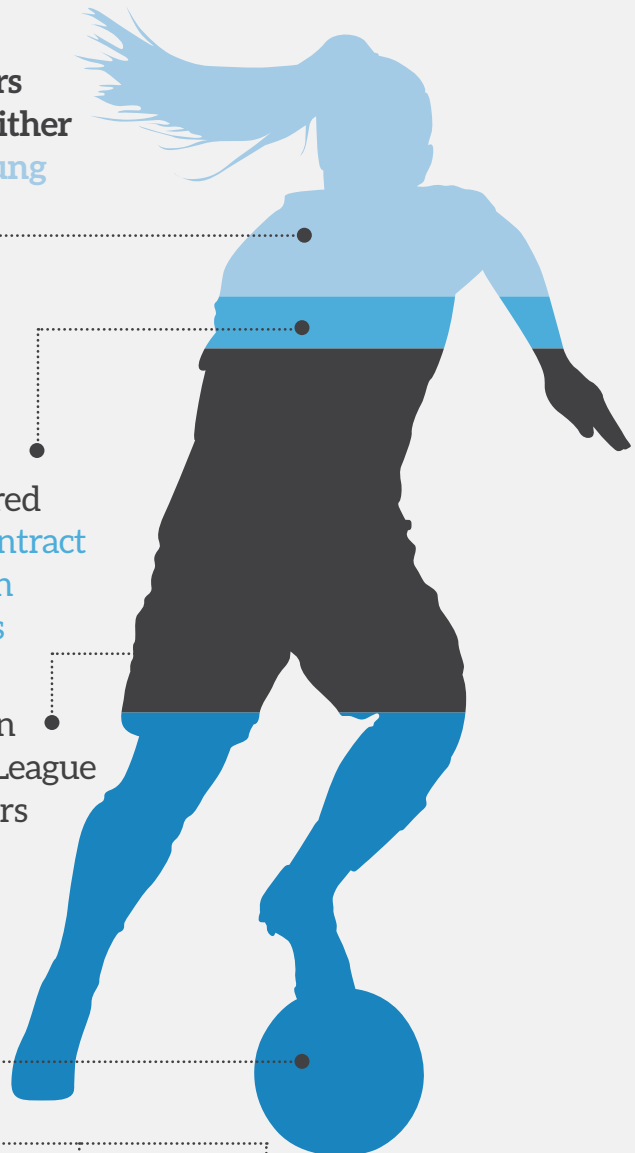
- minimum wage

- parental policy

- access to education funding

- access to career and development programs

- minimum medical standards in line with the A-League



“ Fear of injury and a lack of protections

is a massive concern, ”

*current W-League player on why they would consider leaving the game early.*

# 4

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT & WELLBEING

Football commitments proved to be a major barrier in W-League players' attempts to enter into additional commitments outside of the game. The primary reasons for this were cited as:

- insufficient time due to football commitments; and
- unable to find an employer that is willing to accommodate their footballing commitments.

# 60%

of players have indicated that at some point they have had to quit their work or study due to football



**28% of W-League players have completed a Bachelor or Masters Degree**

The main reasons why players would consider leaving the game early:



financial



lack of career options



to start a family

“Without a parental policy it would be impossible to continue playing whilst caring for a child. The financial cost would be too much, early retirement would be the only practical option, ”

*current W-League player on why they would leave the game early.*

Employment of players is predominantly in the service industry and in a casual or part time capacity.



5

85%

of players reported that they felt some sort of stress on their relationship with their employer when getting time off work due to football commitments

80%

of players indicated they would consider leaving the game early to pursue a better quality of life

## PLAYER PAYMENTS

100%

of players believe that there should be a **minimum wage in place for the W-League**



**It costs each W-League player on average \$2,237 to play in the W-League**, with 10% of players receiving no form of remuneration from their club. (Costs include health insurance, gym membership and travel during the W-League season).

70%



of players are **unsatisfied with their current financial situation**

50%



of players indicated they had received **no financial assistance from clubs to assist in meeting relocation expenses** when moving clubs







“ My season salary equated to approx.

\$6 per contact hour, ”

*current W-League player on contract remuneration.*

## 6 WORKLOAD (HOURS OF WORK)

W-League players' weekly workload was on average 24 hours per week, this included:

-  **Matches;**
-  **Training;**
-  **Medical treatment;**
-  **Travel;**
-  **Player appearances; and**
-  **Team meetings**

75%

of players indicated that additional training outside that of their W-League club commitments is required to ensure they can perform at the highest standard



On average, players undertake



**7 club commitments per week.**

Each football session's duration is approximately 2 hours

“ The demands on the players are going up rapidly in the

W-League. Our pay and conditions are not keeping pace, ”

*current W-League player.*





7

# WORKPLACE STANDARDS & CONDITIONS



75%

of players consider their **training and playing facilities to not be of an acceptable standard**

51%

of players indicated that they do not have access to preventative and rehabilitation services from their club

25%

of players pay for their own gym membership

60%

of players find the travel and accommodation provided by their club is not conducive to an elite environment

**The main reasons for this:**

- flying in and out on match day;
- providing own food for away trips;
- large numbers of players sharing rooms; and
- unsafe location of accommodation.

“ At times we would play on surfaces that

have a significant risk of injury, ”

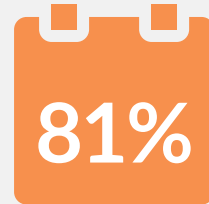
current W-League player on their training and playing facilities.

8

# THE STATE OF THE WOMEN'S GAME



99% of players feel that the W-League is an **extremely important** part of women's football in Australia



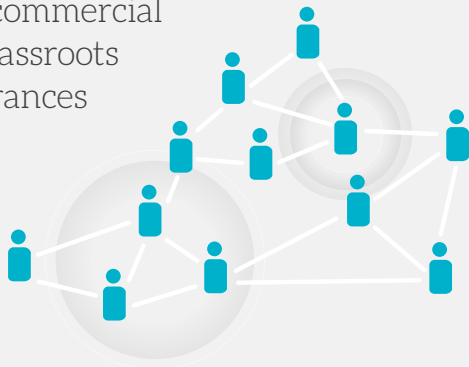
81% of players indicated that **the length of the W-League season is not conducive to an elite competition**



All players agree that the number of **commercial and grassroots appearances** needs to increase in order to generate a greater awareness of the W-League



Players are willing to undertake more commercial and grassroots appearances

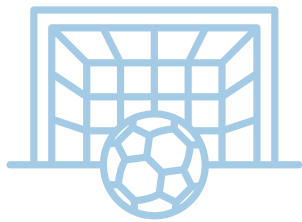


91% of players do **1 or less**

media interviews per week to promote their club's matches

# CASE STUDIES

## TRAINING AND PLAYING FACILITIES



**Local male teams always take priority over us.** This makes it impossible for us to have a regular base, as we have to fit in where and when we can for training. Our change rooms are often too small to all get changed in at the same time. Medical treatment is fairly regularly done

on plastic chairs, as the benches at a lot of our training grounds are broken or unsafe. **On the pitch the surfaces are generally bumpy and uneven. Players have had stuff stolen from the change rooms** while we have been training because we can't lock them.



## PAY



**One thousand dollars a season has been my pay for the past four seasons** – it doesn't even cover my costs to get to training. I earn more a month from my part time job than

I do playing in the top women's football league. Often I have to cancel shifts due to my football commitments. **This means that it costs me to play in the W-League.**

The sad reality is that some women's NPL [National Premier League] clubs pay their players better than what a lot of W-League clubs do.







## TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION



On one occasion **we had to stay in a hospital as the club didn't book accommodation** far enough in advance, even though they get the draw before the start of the season. The accommodation was not up to

scratch, with male staff sharing the same bathroom facilities as the female players. **On match days when we travel away we are expected to bring our own food.**





## 9 PFA ACTION PLAN

The key findings from this survey, along with the collective concerns of the players, will be used to inform the PFA's position regarding the establishment of a W-League CBA.

The CBA must establish a framework in which Football Federation Australia, W-League clubs and the PFA can grow the game and address the issues contained in this report. A W-League CBA must include:

- **minimum wage protections;**
- **appropriate insurance cover;**
- **career development and wellbeing support; and**
- **a commitment to the development of a 'world class' workplace.**

The PFA's W-League members are united in their pursuit to improve their working conditions. This is a shared challenge, which is critical to the continued growth of Australian football and our international competitiveness. It is one that must be tackled by all stakeholders.



“ We want to grow the game but we are not given the support from a marketing and media sense. Most clubs don't have a dedicated Media Manager for their W-League team, ”

*current W-League player.*





## A shared commitment to bettering the lives of our members.

LUCRF Super has been the major partner of the PFA since 2009.

We play a key role in providing superannuation and financial education to PFA members.

### Why should you choose LUCRF Super?

- Like the PFA, we're run only to benefit members
- Talk to real people who understand your needs as a footballer
- Benefit from personalised financial advice
- Keep on top of your super payments with our secure mobile app
- You can feel confident your investments are in good hands.

**We are committed to supporting you  
*on and off the pitch.***

To join LUCRF Super call

**1300 130 780**

or visit [lucrf.com.au](http://lucrf.com.au)



**LUCRFsuper**

Australia's first industry fund



This information is provided by L.U.C.R.F Pty Ltd ABN 18 005 502 090 AFSL 258481 as Trustee for Labour Union Co-Operative Retirement Fund (LUCRF Super) ABN 26 382 680 883. This is general advice only and has been prepared without taking into account your personal financial situation, objectives or needs. You should assess your personal financial situation before making a decision about LUCRF Super. To help you decide we recommend you read our current Product Disclosure Statement (PDS), available from the website or by calling us.

COURAGE  
WORLD CLASS  
INTELLIGENCE  
TRUST  
RESPECT



**Professional Footballers Australia Inc.**

221/757 Bourke Street, Victoria, 3008,

Email: [info@pfa.net.au](mailto:info@pfa.net.au)

Tel: 1300 650 497



AUSTRALIAN  
ATHLETES'  
ALLIANCE

