

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2025-28



SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS
BUILDING THE GAME



SECURING THE FUTURE OF
THE PROFESSIONAL GAME

SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS BUILDING THE GAME



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In the spirit of reconciliation, Professional Footballers Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We also acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Elders past, present, and emerging throughout Australia, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, laws, and culture. They hold the memories, traditions, cultures, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

The PFA is a NoCO2 business certified by the Carbon Reduction Institute (CRI)



The PFA is a proud member of the Welcome Here Project, which supports businesses and services throughout Australia to create and promote environments that are visibly welcoming and inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities.

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FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Emerging from the shadow of the global pandemic, Australian football was afforded a generational opportunity. The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup shattered viewership and attendance records and has been the catalyst for huge grassroots growth.

The Matildas captivated the nation with a historic semi-final run, while the Socceroos delivered their best-ever performance at a men's World Cup.

These moments arrived after 20 years of foundational progress for the professional game in Australia, established in the early 2000s. This included the establishment of a new professional men's league, Australia's entry into Asia, and the rise of the women's game through the Matildas and the A-League Women.

This progress was supported and elevated by world-leading collective bargaining agreements for the national teams and the domestic leagues, won by players who shared the ambition of realising football's potential in the world's most competitive sports market.

The Socceroos and Matildas' achievements in 2022 and 2023 should have been the launchpad for a new golden era of growth, development and investment across the professional game.

However, following the global spotlight and opportunity that the World Cups brought, the professional game spiralled into crisis largely of its own making. Through a mix of strategy, governance and leadership failures, the promise of A-Leagues separation to deliver a better future for the professional game was squandered.

In reflecting on the past four years we must acknowledge where we have fallen short to support the players and build the game. In doing so we can then build our capacity to do better.

As the reliable catalyst for progress and reform over the past 30 years, the players must once again chart the path forward into a new era.

This Strategic Framework embodies the players' ambition to secure the future of the professional game in Australia.

To achieve this mission, the players will need to demonstrate exceptional leadership, pursue an equal say, ensure world class support of each other and show strength.

This Strategic Framework provides us with clarity and purpose. Our values of respect, courage, intelligence, world class and trust will guide how we embark on our mission.

By 2028, the commitment and courage of our members must be honoured by the establishment of a new era of good governance, fairness, respect and a level of leadership that defines all world class organisations and teams.

As always, our success in securing the future of professional game will be determined by our know-how and our solidarity.

Beau Busch
Chief Executive



01 LEADERSHIP VOID & APPETITE FOR CHANGE

- Re-take a leadership position during this crisis to position the PFA as the key protagonist in saving the game
- Own the narrative around the business of football
- The PFA is trusted to act with integrity and take an evidence-based approach
- Outstanding staff and player leaders

02 GREATER FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE & LEVERAGE

- Utilise the growing popularity of the National Teams to create greater financial independence for the PFA and the players
- Develop our commercial capacity to deliver more leverage regarding the direction of the leagues
- Significant PFA reserves that can be harnessed for industrial power

03 WHOLE OF GAME CAPACITY

- Leverage our capacity as the only stakeholder capable of uniting all aspects of the professional game
- Ability through FIFPRO to deliver outcomes beyond the scope of APL
- Embed a culture of solidarity across the membership
- Enormous dissatisfaction with the state of the game and desire for change

04 POTENTIAL OF THE WOMEN'S GAME

- 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup
- Growing commercial interest in the A-League Women
- Brand power of the Matildas remains untethered from the A-League Women

01 HEALTH OF THE PROFESSIONAL GAME

- The professional game is in crisis
- Fan engagement is poor and crowds are below their potential across both leagues
- The broadcast agreement continues to limit growth in relation to visibility, quality and revenue
- Lack of solutions at the APL
- Disconnect between all stakeholders following the separation of the leagues

02 INFLUENCE & POWER

- Little influence over key decisions that impact players, such as expansion
- Control of player commercial rights is limited
- Fragmentation of mainstream media makes telling the players' stories challenging
- Migration of top talent
- Respect for the CBA and the players has eroded as financial challenges have grown

03 PLAYER SUPPORT

- An increasingly young membership in an unstable and volatile industry
- Funding instability in the absence of a CBA for the leagues
- Maintaining service delivery and program standards for a growing membership base

04 GENDER EQUALITY

- Stagnating development of the women's game
- Lack of respect in the workplace for women



OPPORTUNITIES



CHALLENGES

SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS BUILDING THE GAME

This has been the long-term vision of the PFA. This vision integrates: our commitment to the players, the central role we wish to play in a player's journey as a footballer, our unique position to be able to influence the game, the sport's collective capacity to inspire the nation and the overarching social and cultural ambition we have for the sport.

VALUES



RESPECT

We hold a deep respect for the game's institutions and profession of playing the world's greatest game for a living. We understand that the wellbeing of the game is a precondition to the wellbeing of the players



INTELLIGENCE

We adopt a knowledge based approach to finding solutions to major challenges facing the game and the players. We believe in continuous learning and development



WORLD CLASS

We are a global body that has a major role to play in the world game. Our world view embraces the game and its players in our region. Through striving for excellence, we seek to advance football in Australia and our region



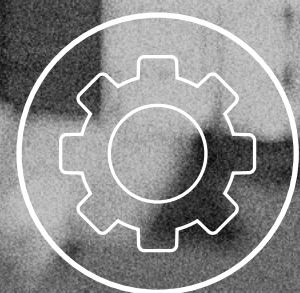
COURAGE

We stand by what we believe in. Our great achievements have come in the face of opposition. Our position is sustainable because our cause is for the good of the game and the players



TRUST

Everything we do is based on the unique trust that exists with our members. The foundations for that trust lie in our deep commitment to our vision, the quality of our work, our knowledge of the game and our belief in acting collectively and in solidarity



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

SNAPSHOT

LEAD

Spearhead a whole of industry recovery.

- Deliver and embed a new vision for the professional leagues
- Champion the future potential of the game through world class research
- Force the industry to recognise the opportunity of women's football
- Lead a proactive industry agenda to tackle the issues impacting the lives and careers of players
- Harness the power of football to tackle the challenges facing our community

EQUAL SAY

Players influence all decisions that impact their careers.

- Develop a comprehensive bargaining, leverage and advocacy campaign that exerts player influence on matters beyond the scope of the current collective bargaining agreements, including expansion, ownership, scheduling, league investment, code of conduct, game strategy and fan engagement
- Bargain world class employment standards and conditions
- Ensure effective administration and enforcement of the collective bargaining agreements
 - Build union consciousness among all players and PFA staff
 - Shape a player-centric legal and regulatory framework

SECURING THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL GAME.

SUPPORT

Holistic development of players through world-leading, player-owned support and recognition programs.

- Grow the support provided to players through the Player Development Program in challenging times and elevate player ownership
- Provide a safety net that minimises the impact of acute industry failures on players
- Invest in deeply understanding the ever-evolving membership base and respond accordingly
- Celebrate the players' achievements and experiences through outstanding recognition programs

STRENGTH

A powerful association that can confidently pursue its mission.

- Position the PFA as the protector of the game's soul and the authentic voice of the players
- Pursue greater financial independence to insulate the PFA from external volatility
- Ensure deep engagement and influence in the broader union movement
- Attract, retain and develop world class staff
- Maintain the highest standards of corporate governance



LEAD: SPEARHEAD A WHOLE OF INDUSTRY RECOVERY.

OBJECTIVE 1

Deliver and embed a new vision for the professional leagues.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Committing to release comprehensive visions for the professional leagues
- Engaging all generations of PFA members in pursuit of the professional leagues vision being realised
- Winning support for our vision from all stakeholders within the industry
- Sparking and leading an industry committed to reform and recovery

OBJECTIVE 2

Champion the future potential of the game through world class research.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Continuing to invest in world class research and insights
- Ensuring players are able to articulate PFA positions
- Seeing our findings reflected in the public discourse

OBJECTIVE 3

Force the industry to recognise the opportunity of women's football.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Painting a compelling, evidence-based picture of how big a women's league would be if done right
- Providing a platform for players to shape and own their professional futures
- Demanding that the industry match our ambition



OBJECTIVE 4

Lead a proactive industry agenda to tackle the issues impacting the lives and careers of players.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Adopting a Human Rights based approach to prevent, address and remedy matters that are acutely impacting the players, such as abuse, concussion and social media
- Developing a research agenda spanning all aspects of the player experience
- Building effective working relationships with FA, APL and the clubs
- Supporting, contributing and leveraging our relationships with WPA, FIFPRO and the AAA

OBJECTIVE 5

Harness the power of football to tackle the challenges facing our community.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Pushing the industry to better address social causes that impact players and the community
- Building partnerships with like-minded organisations that are using the power of sport in pursuit of progress
- Establishing Footballers' Trust as Australia's preeminent athlete-led social impact vehicle

OBJECTIVE 6

Shape a player-centric legal and regulatory framework.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Achieving consistent success in player disputes
- Ensuring all industry rules and regulations reflect the players' and the game's interests





EQUAL SAY: PLAYERS INFLUENCE ALL DECISIONS THAT IMPACT THEIR CAREERS

OBJECTIVE 1

Develop a comprehensive bargaining, leverage, and advocacy campaign that exerts player influence on matters beyond the scope of the current collective bargaining agreements, including expansion, ownership, scheduling, league investment, code of conduct, game strategy and fan engagement.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Expanding the breadth of the PFA's expertise by developing staff and engaging experts
- Proactively preparing for the next round of professional leagues and National Teams collective bargaining
- Exerting whole of game leverage through the National Teams collective bargaining agreement

OBJECTIVE 2

Bargain world-class employment standards and conditions.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Benchmarking our collective agreements against those of leading leagues and player unions
- Building a comprehensive player vision ahead of negotiations, incorporating the players' voice and industry expertise
- Involving players in the bargaining process
- Effectively enforcing all player rights
- Ensuring high levels of understanding of player rights and responsibilities

OBJECTIVE 3

Ensure effective administration and enforcement of the collective bargaining agreements.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Maintaining effective relationships with FA, APL, and the clubs
- Developing effective compliance measures
- Building a culture of respect for the collective bargaining agreements with all stakeholders

OBJECTIVE 4

Build union consciousness among all players and PFA staff.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- All PFA staff adopting an organising mindset
- Telling and retelling the PFA's story through all channels
- Developing and executing effective player induction, leadership, and organising programs
- Utilising information technologies to reach and engage a new generation of players





SUPPORT:

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYERS THROUGH WORLD-LEADING, PLAYER-OWNED SUPPORT & RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

OBJECTIVE 1

Defend player ownership and grow the capacity of the Player Development Program.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Renewing the PDP strategy
- Extensively promoting the impact of the PDP
- Further establishing the autonomy and independence of the PDP
- Engaging in world leading research projects
- Building strong industry partnerships
- Embedding the PDP in all aspects of the PFA's operations
- Exerting greater autonomy over coach education programs

OBJECTIVE 2

Provide a safety net that minimises the impact of acute industry failures on players.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Enhancing crisis support programs in relation to acute financial and medical matters
- Establishing bespoke crisis support programs related to player wellbeing
- Elevating transition support services to ensure continuity of care between current and past players

OBJECTIVE 3

Invest in deeply understanding the ever-evolving membership base and respond accordingly.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Making sure all support services and programs are shaped by evidence, research and by those they are meant to support
- Constantly collecting feedback from players through multiple channels

OBJECTIVE 4

Celebrate the players' achievements and experiences through outstanding recognition programs.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Renewing the awards and recognition strategy
- Establishing the PFA Alex Tobin OAM Medal and Footballer of the Year as the preeminent awards in Australian football
- Growing the commercial returns associated with the PFA Awards to further invest into their viability





STRENGTH:

A POWERFUL ASSOCIATION THAT CAN CONFIDENTLY PURSUE ITS MISSION

OBJECTIVE 1

Position the PFA as protector of the game's soul and the authentic voice of the players.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Publicising how and where Australian football's interests are being threatened
- Deepening ties with fans and other Australian football allies
- Comprehensively capturing the players' voice through meetings, surveys, committees and relationships

OBJECTIVE 2

Pursue greater financial independence to insulate the PFA from external volatility.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Developing and implementing a player-led commercial program that builds collective value
- Strategically managing and investing the players' funds with the support of industry experts

OBJECTIVE 3

Ensure deep engagement and influence in the broader union movement.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Adding value to FIFPRO, FIFPRO Asia/Oceania, and the Women's Football Steering Council
- Elevating the work of the AAA and WPA



OBJECTIVE 4

Attract, retain and develop world class staff.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Offering attractive terms and conditions of employment
- Developing current and former players into the next generation of PFA people
- Safeguarding our values-led culture
- Investing in the development of knowledge and expertise across all aspects of the PFA

OBJECTIVE 5

Maintain the highest standards of corporate governance.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Player ownership over all aspects of the PFA
- Cultivating the insights and expertise of PFA Champions and Life Members in support of our mission



2025

KEY INITIATIVES

- Complete preparations for a professional leagues CBA and commence negotiations
- Enforce the National Teams CBA
- Develop and implement a PFA commercial strategy
- Pursue equal prize money campaign for the 2026 AFC Asian Women's Cup
- Renew the PDP and organising strategy
- Implement the Safe Football Project

2026

- Release new professional leagues visions
- Host a Football For Good Conference
- Agree a new professional leagues CBA
- Release Women's Golden Generation Report
- Host a Safe Football Conference
- Host the FIFPRO ASIA/OCEANIA Congress
- Host the Asian Women's Football Development Summit
- Prepare for National Teams CBA negotiations
- Mid-point Strategic Framework review

2027

- FIFA Women's World Cup equal prize money campaign
- Implement the professional leagues CBA
- Agree a new National Teams CBA

2028

- FIFPRO ASIA/OCEANIA and Global Elections
- Implement National Teams CBA
- Formal review of professional leagues reforms

