



Future of Football 2020+ **Opportunities** **Paper.**





Contents

Football 2020+ Summary	03
Consultation Plan	04
Engagement Process	06
Consultation Summary	10
Governance	12
Administration	20
Competitions	28
NPL Review	39
Affordability	50
The Next Steps	61

Football 2020+ Summary

The ambitious Future of Football 2020+ journey aims to shape a bright future for football in Queensland by unlocking the immense opportunity and potential of the game.

As the largest club-based participation sport in Queensland with over 186,000 participants, it is vital that football addresses the challenges and opportunities facing the game to ensure its ongoing success and viability.

Football stakeholders across Queensland were invited to engage in a six-month state-wide consultation process based on the Future of Football 2020+ Consultation Paper released in May 2020, focusing on four key areas of the game; governance, administration, competitions and affordability.

In order to unite football in the state and establish a strong foundation for the future of the game, each of these areas and their impact on the football ecosystem must be considered.

The feedback gathered so far throughout the extensive engagement effort has been outlined in this Opportunities Paper. Further input from stakeholders will culminate in a First Report and Implementation Plan outlining the future direction of the game in Queensland beyond 2020.

1



Governance

2



Administration

3



Competitions

4



Affordability

Consultation Plan Summary

12 Stakeholder Groups



Participants



Volunteers



FQ Zones



Clubs



Futsal



Women & Girls



Coaches



Referees



Government



Schools



Church Leagues



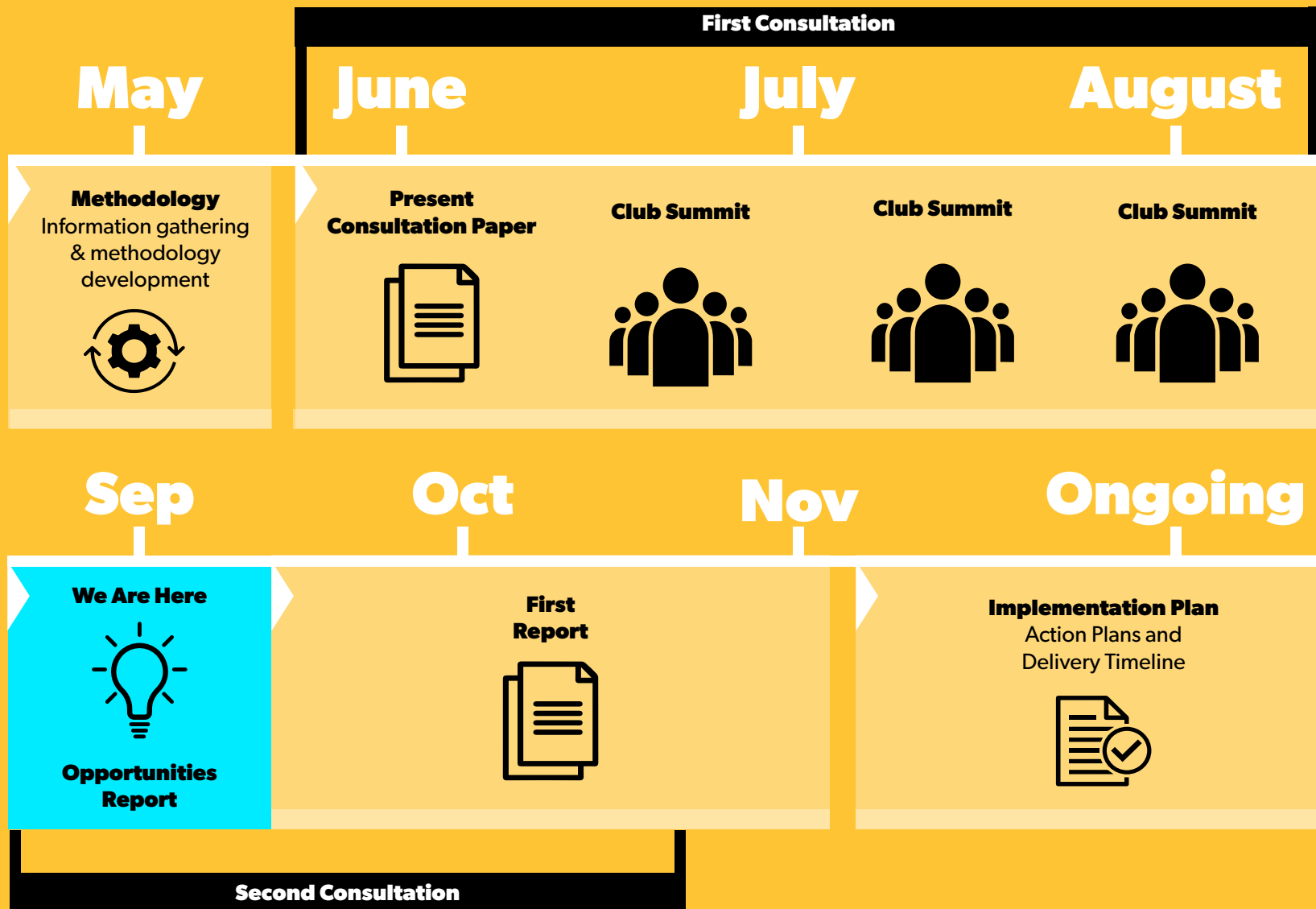
Sponsors

Following the release of the Future of Football 2020+ Consultation Paper in May 2020, the first stage of consultation kicked off in June, with all members of the Queensland football community invited to provide their feedback to help shape the future of the game.

Football Queensland has consulted with 12 stakeholder groups in the first stage of the six-month Future of Football 2020+ consultation process through a range of platforms including Club Summits, surveys and webinars, among others.

Football Queensland will embark on the second stage of the Future of Football 2020+ consultation process throughout September and October, before compiling all findings to produce a First Report and Implementation Plan.

The Road Ahead+



Engagement Summary

186,000 participants, 317 clubs and thousands of other members of the Queensland football community across the state were provided an opportunity to help shape the future of the game in the first stage of consultation through a series of polls, surveys and Club Summits.

A total of 25 surveys, 17 Club Summits, a Zone Presidents' Summit and an FQ staff consultation session were conducted between June and August 2020 as part of the first stage of the Future of Football 2020+ consultation process.

Football Queensland (FQ) launched a four episode Future of Football 2020+ podcast series in June 2020 to kick off the consultation process featuring FQ Chief Executive Officer Robert Cavallucci. Each episode was accompanied by a survey to allow stakeholders to provide feedback based on the four key areas of the game.

Surveys

Surveys of the wider football community were then distributed throughout June, July and August seeking feedback on the game's governance, administration, competitions and affordability and providing an opportunity for stakeholders including commercial partners, church leagues and schools to contribute.

Two surveys were also produced and distributed specifically for clubs and participants from FQ's competitions, forming part of the review into National Premier Leagues (NPL) competitions and the Future of Football 2020+ process; an NPL Men's, Junior Boys and FQPL survey and an NPL Women's and Junior Girls survey.

Consultation Sessions

The Future of Football 2020+ Club Summits kicked off in Cairns on Saturday, 4 July and concluded with a virtual North West Queensland Club Summit on Wednesday, 9 September. In total, 124 clubs and 241 club and zone administrators, referees, coaches and technical directors were in attendance at the 17 Club Summits held around the state, with clubs represented from community level to the NPL Queensland.

Future of Football 2020+ consultation sessions were also conducted with Football Queensland Zone Presidents and Football Queensland staff members, giving them an opportunity to help shape the game moving forward.

**Feedback
received
from**



25
SURVEYS



17
CLUB SUMMITS



241
ATTENDEES



124
CLUBS

Stakeholders who engaged in the Future of Football 2020+ Club Summits and online surveys:

Far North Queensland

Southside Comets
Edge Hill United
Saints Soccer Club
JCU Strikers
Marlin Coast Rangers
Stratford Dolphins FC
Innisfail United FC
Souths FC Gordonvale
Mareeba United FC
Atherton Eagles
Leichhardt Junior Soccer Club
Leichhardt Lions FC
Football Queensland Far North

North Queensland

Wulguru United FC
Saints Eagles Souths FC
Estates FC
Rebels FC
Riverway Vikings FC
Brothers Townsville FC
Ross River (JCU) FC
MA Olympic
Football Queensland North

North West Queensland

Mount Isa Atlas FC
Parkside United Junior Football Club
Football Queensland North West

Gold Coast

Nerang FC
Gold Coast United
Magic United
Gold Coast Knights
Mudgeeraba SC

Gold Coast cont.

Burleigh FC
Robina City FC
Ormeau FC
Broadbeach United
Coomera Colts
Somerset Spartans FC
FC Barcelona - Barça Academy
Brisbane
Kingscliff Wolves FC
Football Queensland Gold Coast

South West Queensland

Ballandean FC
Tenterfield FC
Stanthorpe United Redbacks FC
Garden City Raiders FC
South Toowoomba Hawks
USQFC
West Wanderers FC
SWQ Thunder
Gatton Redbacks FC
Rockville Rovers FC
Highfields FC
Stanthorpe City FC
Football Queensland South West

Mackay

Magpies Crusaders United FC
Mackay Lions SC
City Brothers FC
Country United FC
Dolphins FC
Whitsunday United FC
Football Queensland Mackay
Regional

Wide Bay

Brothers Aston Villa
United Warriors FC
Wide Bay Buccaneers
Across The Waves FC
Kawungan Sandy Straits Jets
Fraser Flames
Diggers FC
Bingera FC
United Park Eagles FC
Tinana FC
Doon Villa FC
Sunbury Blues FC
Football Queensland Wide Bay

Sunshine Coast

Maleny Rangers FC
Noosa Lions FC
Maroochydore FC
Sunshine Coast Wanderers
Buderim Wanderers
Kawana FC
Woombye Snakes FC
Flinders FC
Gympie Diggers FC
Gympie United FC
Football Queensland Sunshine Coast

Central Queensland

Central FC
Boyne Tannum FC
Clinton FC
Yaralla Junior FC
CQ Wolves FC
Capricorn Coast FC
Gracemere Redbacks
Bluebirds United FC
Nerimbera FC
Frenchville FC
Berserker Bears
Valleys FC
Football Queensland Central

Brisbane

Eastern Suburbs FC
Toowong FC
Southside Eagles
Taringa Rovers
Peninsula Power
North Brisbane FC
The Lakes FC
Samford Rangers
Capalaba FC
Redlands United
Slacks Creek FC
Centenary Stormers FC
UQFC
Logan Lightning FC
Lions FC
Wynnum Wolves FC
Mt Gravatt Hawks
Rosedale Rovers FC
Moreton Bay United
The Gap FC
Western Spirit FC
Brisbane City FC

Brisbane Strikers
Olympic FC
Holland Park Hawks
AC Carina
Clairvaux FC
Ipswich Knights
Mitchelton FC
Newmarket Soccer FC
Oxley United
Redcliffe PCYC Dolphins Soccer
Springfield FC
Arana United
Virginia United FC
Souths United
Brisbane Roar FC
Football Queensland Brisbane

Other Stakeholders

Football Federation Australia
Coaches & Technical Directors
Referees
Futsal
Church Leagues (QCSA & SCCSA)
Schools (GPS & AIC)
Sponsors
Queensland Government
(Queensland Sport and Recreation)
Local Councils
Local Media

“Across each of the consultations the local football community has been engaging and productive, and it has been encouraging to see first-hand the football community’s enthusiasm in helping to shape the future of football in Queensland.”

Robert Cavallucci, CEO Football Queensland



Zone Presidents' Summit, Meakin Park



Rockhampton Club Summit



Sunshine Coast Club Summit



Townsville Club Summit



Childers Club Summit



Gladstone Club Summit

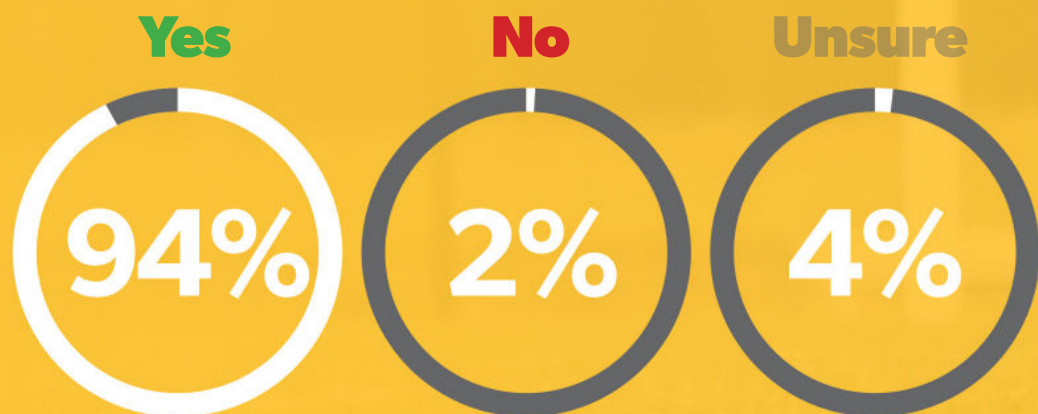
Consultation Summary

An extensive consultation effort spanning several months, regions and mediums delivered deep insights into Queensland's footballing landscape and gathered responses to the game's critical issues in the first stage of the Future of Football 2020+ consultation process.

In an initial poll conducted as consultation kicked off in June 2020, 94% of respondents from the football community voted yes to the question 'Does football in Queensland need reform?'.

The result was overwhelmingly supportive of a process to reform football in the state, and framed the discussions held in the subsequent consultation sessions which explored four key focus areas; governance, administration, competitions and affordability.

Does Football in Queensland need reform?





The Opportunities for Football in Queensland.

Synthesizing the vast and valuable feedback obtained during the consultation process and assessing how these recommendations best apply to the local game will be critical to driving key outcomes for football in Queensland.





REFORM 1

Governance



Governance



We spoke about what governance is...

- Ultimately responsible for an organisation's actions
- The system by which an organisation is directed and spells out the rules and procedures for making organisational decisions
- Influences how the strategic objectives of the organisation are set and achieved and determines the means of optimising and monitoring organisation performance
- Essential for an organisation to achieve its objectives and drive improvement
- There to provide confidence to the organisation's key stakeholders, such as the members, players, coaches, referees, clubs and others such as Government
- A 'millstone' for any organisation if poorly structured or executed
- In the modern sporting world, distinctly separate from and not to be confused with 'administration'

We showed stakeholders what the current governance structure looked like:



The LAC's functions are highly localised and mainly involve:
Maintenance of local shared fields and facilities, operation of Bar or Canteen, facilitate Minirooms on game day, Summer 6's and other heavily localised competition management

Currently the various LAC's that exist in Queensland are NOT recognised constitutionally by the FFA, FQ, the 10 administrative Zones within Queensland or any party in the Australian football ecosystem.

Governance Challenges



We talked about some of the issues in the existing governance structure of the game:

The challenges to be addressed

- Constrained ability to deliver meaningful and strategic reforms including participation, women & girls, and referees due to fragmented governance structure
- Varying degrees of effectiveness in Zone organisations
- Lack of risk management protocols expose office holders across all levels of governance
- Stakeholders suffer lack of transparency around management decisions due to multiple layers of governance (the optics of who is responsible?)
- Lack of financial accountability and transparency across the little-known governance layers of the game
- Limited ability to optimally leverage and secure government funding opportunities, government requires football to deliver a single point of accountability, a 'unified' brand and strategic approach not currently in existence
- Growing concern that key parts of the Football Family are not represented (particularly females)
- Ensuring that the Football Queensland Board operates at best practice for the benefit of the Football Family in Queensland

What you said

- "There is currently a disconnect between FFA, FQ and local zones." – Cairns club
- "There's confusion around affiliation and governance structures." – Brisbane club
- "Currently there is a lack of uniformity between zones." – Brisbane club
- "Transparency of information and communication across the levels of administration and governance is not forthcoming enough." – Mackay club
- "There are too many layers of governance." – Wide Bay club

We asked the following 3 questions:

- 1 Are there existing structures or practices across the game that you think are inefficient or unwieldy?
- 2 Thinking about the existing governance structure, do you feel you have a say or are heard by FQ?
- 3 If you had the ability to restructure the governance of the game in Queensland, how would you do it? Outline some positives and negatives of what you propose.

What you told us:

We need a uniformed, collaborative and united approach. – *Brisbane club*

Remove all inefficient layers of governance. – *Wide Bay club*

LACs are inefficient and there is no transparency, we are not unified. – *Stanthorpe club*

A reduction of layers of governance will enable more cost-effective and quality administration. – *Townsville club*

Consider the need for all layers of governance and consider streamlining. – *Gold Coast club*

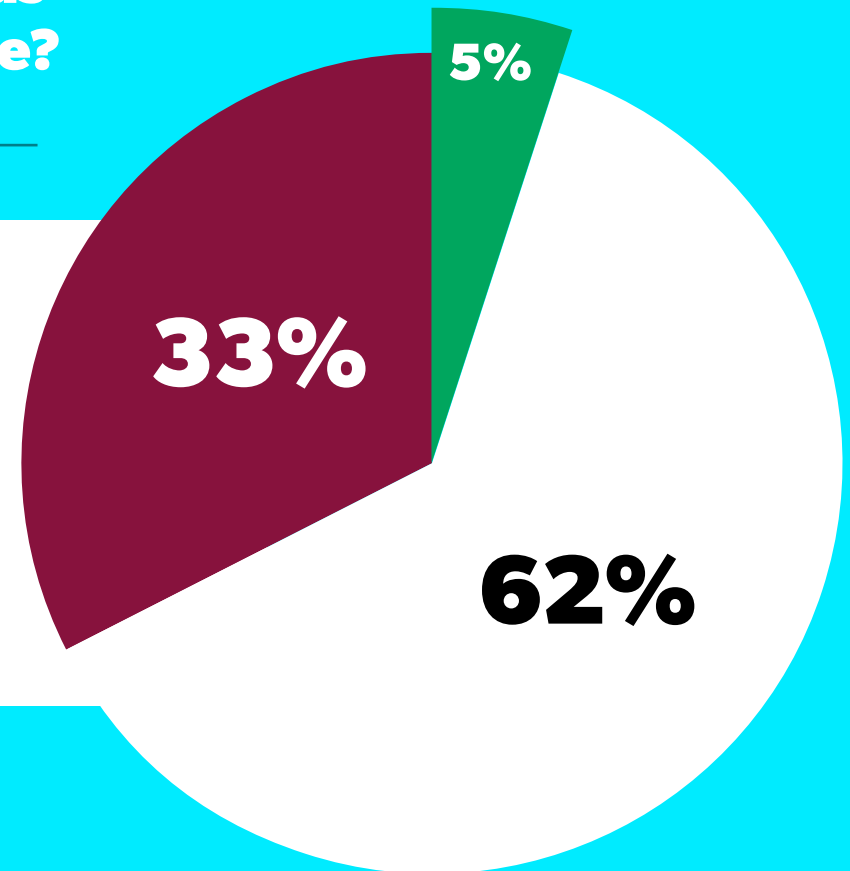
Why not have one entity? – *Brisbane club*




There should be continuity with less layers of governance to allow for cost savings. – *Gold Coast club*

FQ to become an extension of the FFA model. – *Toowoomba club*

Do you feel that the game is in safe hands under the existing governance structure?

Only 5% of respondents believe the game is in safe hands under the existing structure of 5 layers of governance.



 **Yes: 5%**  **In Part** - But let's streamline the governance model: **62%**  **No** - We need a root and branch review: **33%**

Governance: What you told us



The Consultation Paper outlines how strong governance can facilitate effective leadership of the game across Queensland.

In a survey conducted by FQ in June 2020, 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that great governance models lead to stable, effective and efficient administration.

There was considerable feedback throughout the Future of Football 2020+ Club Summits indicating that Queensland and Australia's existing five layers of governance creates an environment of competing interests that undermine the unity and confuse the strategic direction of the game.

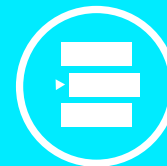
Common suggestions for a streamlined approach centred on reducing the layers of governance, which were said to be inefficient and lacking accountability, while multiple groups promoted the view that FQ should effectively become a Queensland-based extension of FFA.

This repurposed FFA Q branch, it was suggested, could focus on governance of a streamlined and simplified administrative structure of the game across Queensland. Community club representatives proposed a number of different ideas on how they could be afforded more opportunity to have a say and contribute to the strategic direction of the game.

Common Themes



Streamline the game's governance

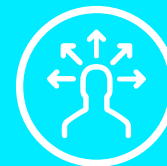


Remove or restructure the inefficient layers



Ensure a more effective voice for grassroots

Secondary Themes



Improve turnaround for decision making



Improve uniformity to improve understanding



More representative congress



Governance Reform Opportunity

The Consultation Paper released in May highlighted how the state's existing governance model was hindering state-wide alignment on strategic planning and blurring accountability of the game's leadership.

These challenges also restrict football's ability to leverage corporate and government funding opportunities, deliver on strategic infrastructure priorities and achieve greater transparency, all important functions for governing bodies.

Stakeholder consultation highlighted and reinforced the need to alleviate competing interests and to resolve the lack of clarity around decision-making processes that has created frustration within the community and led to increasing the cost of leading the game in Queensland.

Stakeholders delivered clear feedback that a streamlined model of the game's governance should be investigated. This also aligns with FQ's Strategic Plan objective for a simplified governance structure. It cannot be overlooked that the grassroots game has advocated for mechanisms that improve stakeholder representation, as well as addressing the role of LACs across the game.

The prevailing view that there are simply too many governance layers presents a clear opportunity to develop a new model which involves fewer obstacles to strategic alignment and one which also comprises a more diverse opportunity for stakeholders to have a say.

Future outcomes will need to propel football in Queensland towards a more fit-for-purpose governance framework which results in better conditions for stable, effective and efficient administration.



REFORM 2

Administration



Administration



We talked about what Administration is:

- Administration is separate to governance (although they need to work hand-in-hand).
- Implements policy, systems and direction on behalf of governance
- Day-to-day and operational
- Marketing the game
- Growing participation and ensuring they have places to play and are insured
- Training coaches and referees
- Running competitions
- Looking after and developing clubs
- Maintaining the financial records

Administration Challenges



We talked about some of the issues in the existing administration structure of the game:

The challenges to be addressed

- Duplication of service delivery leading to unnecessary layers of cost
- Multiple administrative levels of the game contribute significantly to cost escalations due to inefficient execution of tasks that cross over either between or within zones and Football Queensland
- Multiple administrative layers/zones regularly drift in and out of states of financial hardship leading to significant cost burdens at the Member Federation level, to either assist through provision of resources to manage out of the crisis or the opportunity cost of diverted investment in order to support solvency
- Varying levels of service and quality standards across zones and FQ due to budgetary restrictions and constraints of administrations
- Whilst crucial, on occasion, well meaning, well intentioned volunteers are managing administrative and governance functions outside of their skillsets and competencies
- Unsuitable quality of financial reporting across administrative zones can lead to poor decision making with significant cost implications

What you said

- “There is currently unnecessary duplication in services.” – Gold Coast club
- “Local boards are hindering the ability of Operations Managers to make decisions.” – Rockhampton club
- “There are inconsistent administrative models across the state.” – Sunshine Coast club
- “There is currently duplication in administration.” – Sunshine Coast club
- “Roles and responsibilities across each area are not clearly defined.” – Townsville club
- “There is a lack of incentive to be involved in an administrative capacity at every level of the game.” – Townsville club
- “There is inconsistency in delivery of services to zones and clubs” – Wide Bay club
- “There is too much duplication in administration which needs to be reduced.” – Gold Coast club

The challenges to be addressed cont.

- Commercial partners seek a single point of accountability to connect value propositions with sponsorship opportunities, this leads to an inability to place downward pressure on fees through missed revenue
- Constrained ability to attract quality talent in the game's administration due to administrative and transparency issues acting as deterrents
- Administrative and governance issues leads to an ongoing inability to attract quality talent in the game's administration, leading to increasing costs to manage failings in the game's delivery
- Inability to implement operational change across the game, such as the deployment of technology or consistent football programs & experiences (alignment with strategic plan), further adding to the cost of the game's delivery
- Inconsistent contractual relationships for participants across Zones and with FQ
- Lack of clarity in decision making and lines of responsibility across administrative layers

What you said continued

- "The processes and procedures in place currently are not consistent." – Gold Coast club
- "Administration of the game has been a merry go round of constant change." - Toowoomba Club



What you told us:

We asked the following 3 questions:

- 1** How should roles and responsibilities be allocated across Queensland to ensure the most efficient and effective delivery of football?
- 2** What would you like to see changed or added in relation to the current administration structure of the game in Queensland?
- 3** What is the optimal model of the game's administration for Queensland?

Removing some layers will remove duplicated costs.
– *Sunshine Coast club*

Focused and centralised administration across the state would reduce barriers and double handling and reduce costs. – *Rockhampton club*

We need a model that finds the correct balance between centralising tasks and decentralising tasks to move the game forward.
– *Rockhampton club*

There should be more centralised administration and a regional focus to organisation structure e.g. SEQ.
– *Sunshine Coast club*

There should be clear hierarchical/structured roles that work towards a unified goal and strategic direction. – *Gladstone club*

With less layers of governance, administration is more aligned to one mindset and supported by one set of processes and procedures. – *Wide Bay club*

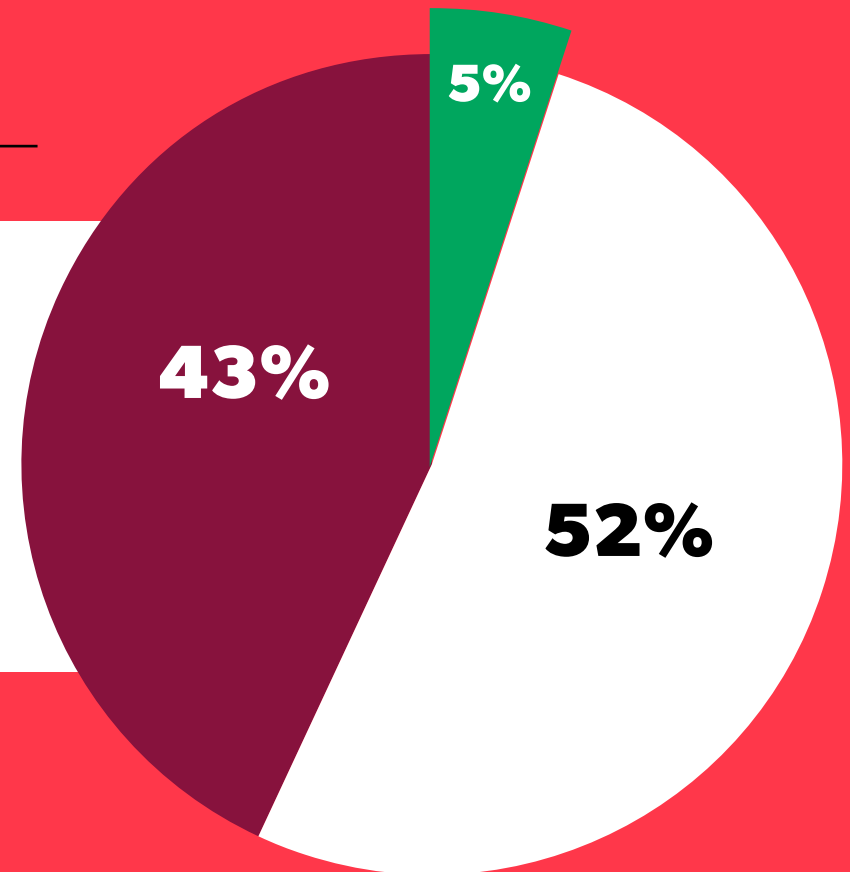
We need shared services and use of technology to gain efficiencies, still with local knowledge and people.
– *Brisbane club*

Streamlined state-wide administration would be best. – *Brisbane club*

Administrative staff across Queensland should all be employed by FQ.
– *Wide Bay club*

In the current administration model for Football In Queensland, do you feel it is easy or difficult to 'get things done'?

Only 5% of respondents believe it is easy to get things done under the current administration model.



● Easy: **5%** ● Not too bad: **52%** ● Difficult: **43%**

Administration: What you told us



Unlike governance, administration relates solely to how the game is run and the overall delivery mechanism for football, competitions and programs across Queensland.

There was widespread agreement that greater investment is needed to attract skilled administrators deployed across Queensland at all levels with an emphasis on delivering a far more agile and professional football product by streamlining administrative layers and reducing role duplication.

It was highlighted that administrative professionals need clearer roles, responsibilities and training to be more agile and responsive to participant needs with many indicating administrative staff across Queensland should all be in the employ of Football Queensland.

Ideas emerged around the opportunity to provide greater administration support across larger geographies to coordinate overarching objectives, provide more sophisticated guidance on programs and improve and escalate concerns with direct links to FQ.

There was clear feedback that more resources needed to be allocated to directly supporting clubs to not only support and build their technical delivery, but to lift their own governance and administrative capacity.

Significantly, each region expressed a desire for administrators to have more time to focus on key local services to clubs and participants on matters that improved the local experience and grow participation with suggestions that to achieve this, some administrative functions could be regionalised and some centralised within a more streamlined administration structure.

Common Themes



Invest in a more professional administration structure



Local service delivery backed by administrative core



Single employer of administration staff across Queensland

Secondary Themes



Deliver a more agile administration



Deliver a more consistent football product across Queensland



Improve service delivery and support framework to clubs



Administration Reform Opportunity

An observed community appetite for centralisation of certain tasks lends further momentum to FQ's move towards a cost-efficient shared services model that eliminates duplication, which was conceptually introduced in the Strategic Plan.

This shared services approach is designed to lift the standard of service delivery and provide a consistent football product across Queensland, further enabling cost-saving efficiencies at all levels. It is also evident that opportunities for any new administrative model must continue to harness local insights while providing local staff with appropriate training and clearly defined roles.

A common goal was to deliver administrative outcomes that will reduce the strain on volunteers. Concepts on how this could be achieved revolved around an emphasis on delivering workplaces which attract, engage and retain knowledgeable professionals in key positions.

The Strategic Plan acknowledges this ambition (People and Leadership) and FQ recognises that suitable technologies must continue to be implemented to promote collaboration between the game's administrative functions. Deployment of effective technologies represented a strong community request.

There is now also an opportunity to further investigate the delivery of additional roles – potentially as an extension of FQ's new Club Development Unit – which could integrate into a refreshed regional service delivery model.



REFORM 3

Competitions





Competitions



We talked about Competitions across Queensland:

'Connected Competitions' is outlined in the Strategic Plan as a focus for Football Queensland in the coming years, ensuring pathways for players and great clubs throughout the state.

This move towards more connected competitions is reflected in FFA's XI Principles, with Principle IV discussing a focus on creating a dynamic and engaging football product by optimising competition structures to connect football across the country.

The vast nature of the state provides particular challenges for Queensland competitions, but it is vital that competition structures allow for the development and progression of young aspiring players from both regional and metro Queensland.

Competition Challenges



We talked about some of the issues in the existing competition structure of the game:

The challenges to be addressed

- Leagues are disconnected, inhibiting aspirational clubs and participants from pathways and progression
- Competitions are accessed in different ways, some via licence agreements, some via performance
- Competitions controlled through licence agreements restrict access
- Closed 'licensed restricted' competitions cause division between clubs
- No single point of competition accountability, varying levels of competition quality and product
- Varying levels of enjoyment across competition products
- No single appointment process for referees who are appointed across geographies leading to scheduling failures and conflicts
- Tyranny of distance currently prohibits sustainable regional access into Elite competition
- Quality and standard of clubs participating in Elite competitions are inconsistent and not delivering 'best vs best' outcomes

What you said

- "It still seems fractured – an understanding makes little difference without change." – Brisbane club
- "Women are more likely to drop out." – Sunshine Coast club
- "All competition ideals are based around SEQ models." – Mackay club
- "The competition structure is currently too focused on NPL/FQPL." – Gold Coast club
- "More challenging competitions are required in all levels and age groups." – Townsville club
- "Geographical boundaries limit teams from competing against suitable competition." – Sunshine Coast club
- "A lack of infrastructure is resulting in lower quality competitions." – Rockhampton club

The challenges to be addressed cont.

- There are currently few material consequences of poor club decisions (technical and governance) for clubs operating in licensed frameworks
- Restricted and unclear pathway for boys and girls across Queensland in current competition environment
- Inconsistent competition management across the state and across all leagues
- Consequential implications for affordability and cost, especially in the talent pathway
- Inconsistent contribution to the technical development of players across competitions



We asked the following 2 questions:

- 1 How should competitions be structured to ensure there are clear pathways for clubs and participants?
- 2 What could competitions look like across Queensland if we can implement a more efficient and effective governance and administration model for the game?

What you told us:

Open borders and have more integrated competitions.
– *Gold Coast club*

Competitions should be multi-layered with full promotion and relegation opportunities and representative opportunities to find talent in lower levels. – *Brisbane Club*

There should be more centralised administration and a regional focus to organisation structure e.g. SEQ.
– *Sunshine Coast club*

Allow for connected leagues.
– *Brisbane club*

We should have promotion and relegation across the state and then feed in as second tier to A-League.
– *Cairns club*

There should be amalgamation of zones and conferences for pathway.
– *Townsville Club*

Include our neighbouring zones in additional competitions to draw more participation. – *Rockhampton club*



Representative program needs to be localised through conference system with selection process for Queensland Country selection. – *Townsville Club*

There should be the ability for aspirational clubs to work through the pyramid. – *Brisbane club*

All divisions should have one governing body. – *Brisbane club*

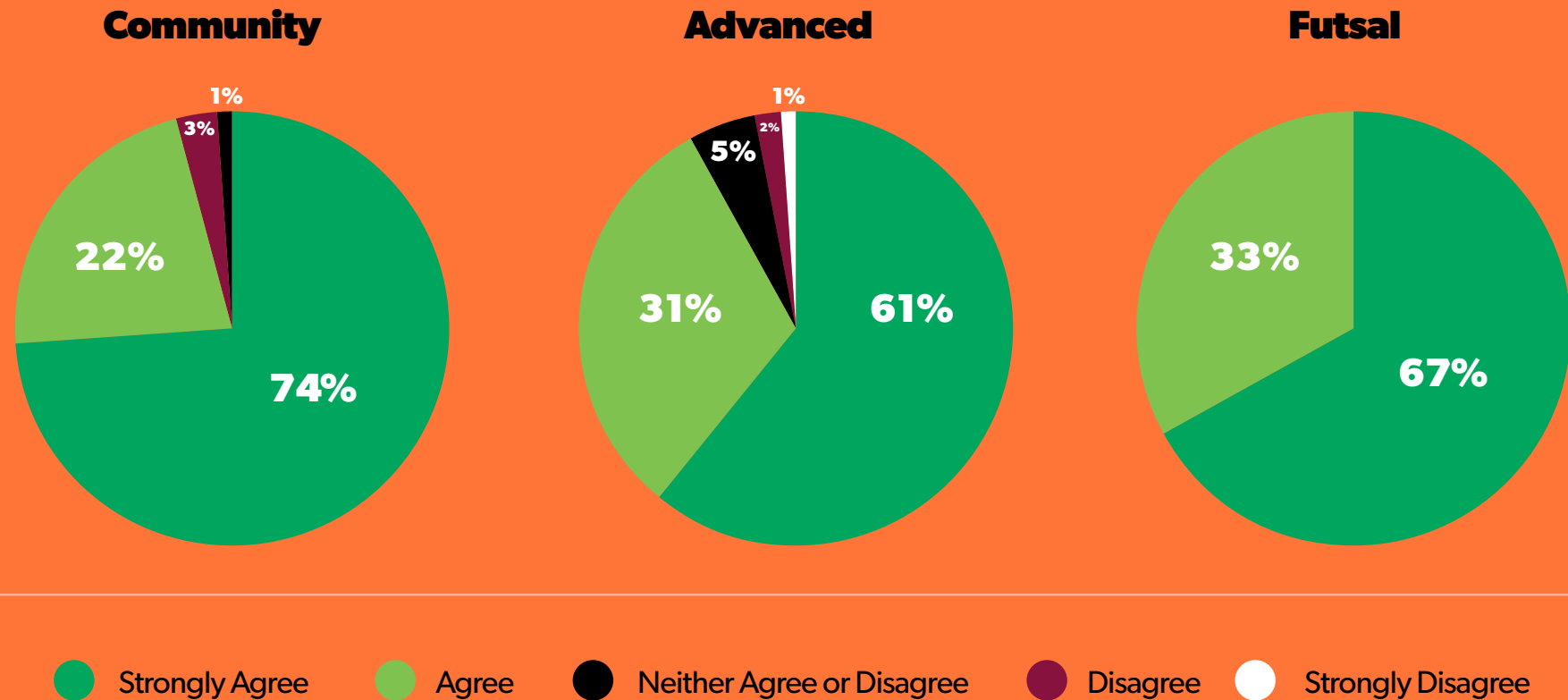
Have a conference system and open the zonal 'borders'. – *Gold Coast club*

We need sustainable competitions that encourage high level and consistent delivery of the game. – *Wide Bay club*

There should be connectivity of competitions to elite opportunities if teams want to progress. – *Toowoomba Club*

We need a conference model and better technical outcomes. – *Brisbane club*

Affordable, quality programs and competitions will grow participation and keep people in the game and enjoying it for longer – how strongly do you agree?



Overwhelmingly you have told us that participants at all levels of the game want to play in competitions and programs that are of a high standard, affordable and fun.

Competitions: What you told us



The Future of Football 2020+ process seeks to determine how to administer and deliver improved competitions across Queensland.

In an FQ survey conducted in June 2020, 74% of community-based respondents and 61% of advanced football respondents (those involved in NPL, SAP and TSP) strongly agreed that affordable, quality programs and competitions will grow participation and keep people in the game and enjoying it for longer.

Throughout the consultation undertaken to date, most stakeholder groups agreed that promotion and relegation should be commonplace at senior level and that the state's best players should have the chance to compete against each other through a competition or tournament that links all regions.

There were differing opinions around how to make this happen, with several advocating for a conference-style system entailing an end-of-season 'champions cup' tournament where each region's top team competes to be crowned Queensland's best.

This could help high-performing regional teams to stay together, subsequently elevating standards within their local areas.

Others would prefer to see a state-wide league feeding into a larger national pyramid and some suggested that regional zones could form representative teams comprising their best players.

One popular idea was to implement dual registration, which would enable these players to still take part in local leagues while competing at higher levels.

All agreed that senior promotion and relegation should not impact juniors, while generally there was a view that the best way to foster elite junior talent is to invest in community clubs.

Common Themes



Deliver a connected football pyramid in Queensland



Strong support for promotion and relegation



Implement conference-based competition system (3 regions)



Remove structural barriers inhibiting development and player movement

Secondary Themes



Continue with high technical/NPL-style state-wide league



More opportunities for regional NPL/representative teams



More opportunities for juniors at community clubs



Competitions Reform Opportunity

Competitions and how people play is the common thread binding participants and the football community.

Consultation found that for aspirational clubs and players, league pyramids based on performance and criteria and incorporating promotion and relegation were the preferred way forward for football, giving administrators reason to reassess the future of existing formats and closed competitions, and review the role of licensing.

The football community has provided clear expectations and discussion with stakeholders has identified possible guiding principles for competition and additional product development:

- Suitable and Fit for Purpose
- Customer Centric
- Sustainability and Viability
- Innovative and Fresh

There is an overwhelming sense that unlocking governance and administrative constraints would make this achievable, enabling teams to compete in competitions aligned to their capabilities and aspirations, serving as clear development pathways.



Another common theme was regional clubs wanting regular competitive matches against other regional clubs that typically lie outside of their existing competition frameworks, while a desire to field multiple teams at different levels to retain young players came through in a strong way.

The opportunity now exists to consider a state-wide, three-conference competition structure as such:

- North Queensland
- Central Queensland
- South East Queensland

Building on the strong desire for regional clubs to have broader competition conferences, there was clear indication for FQ to investigate the implementation of NPL/FQPL 'style' criteria in regional premier league conferences in order to facilitate more guidance, improved technical outcomes and development pathways. This would help facilitate a shift in focus away from SEQ as the only perceived destination for premier level competitive environments.

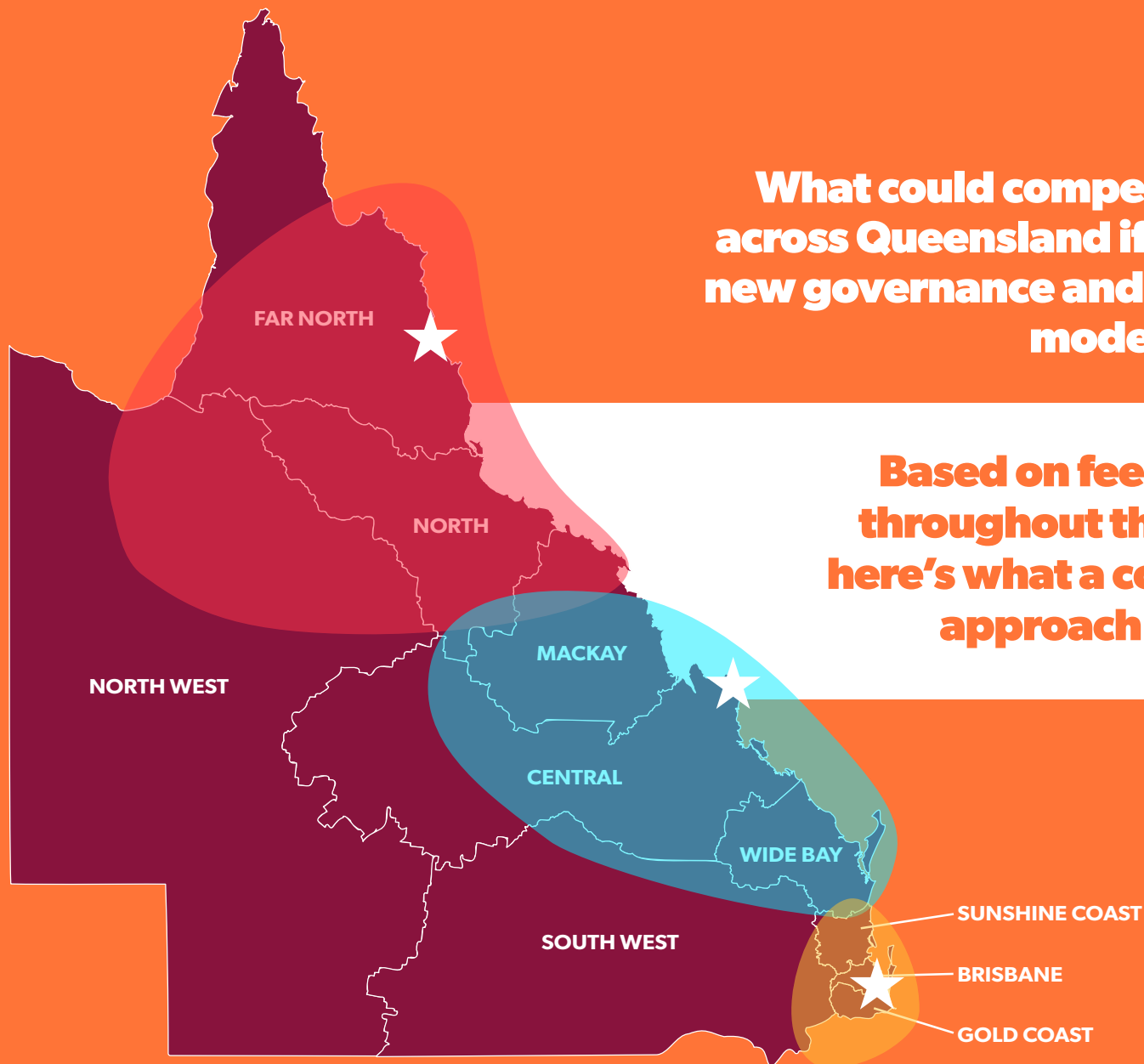
Stakeholders expressed an appetite to have additional game time opportunity through cup/knockout football, complementing the FFA Cup and involving women and youth.

Flexible competition products for players unable to conform to traditional formats was also identified as a key opportunity.

Finally, consistent competition management was highlighted as an important reform area to ensure equal customer experience standards across all regions and levels.

What could competitions look like across Queensland if we can solidify new governance and administration models of the game?

Based on feedback received throughout the consultation, here's what a conference-style approach could look like.



NPL Review

An examination of the NPL landscape ran within the broader Future of Football 2020+ consultation and encompassed stakeholder surveys, club meetings and input from Dylan Potter, General Manager – Competitions at FFA.

It canvassed opinions from coaches, administrators and junior and senior participants on matters ranging from cost to competition structure to standards on and off the pitch.

While the majority of respondents reported either fair to high satisfaction with their overall club and competition experiences, close to or more than 80% of all surveyed groups stated a desire to have more transparency around technical services and programs delivered across all clubs.

This added to clear participant concerns over the level of value for money for involvement in their respective leagues, an area that produced a great deal of feedback.

Common ideas around how to combat high costs included reducing club licensing and compliance requirements, removing administrative layers and capping senior player wages.

Many NPL Women's and Junior Girls participants (66%) felt as though the NPL provides a clear pathway to the W-League or other career opportunities in football, in contrast to the 44% of NPL Men's, Junior Boys and FQPL participants who said the same.

Stakeholders involved in NPL Men's, Junior Boys and FQPL football overwhelmingly voiced support (75%) for promotion and relegation to form part of increased connectivity across competitions at all levels.

Meanwhile, 2021 was pinpointed as the most popular timeframe for changes to take place should FQ introduce NPL reforms.



**730 survey
respondents**



**26 clubs across
3 workshops**



**100 questions in
2 online surveys**

NPL Reform Challenges



We talked about some of the current challenges in the existing NPL Men's, NPL Women's and FQPL competition structures:

NPL Men's & FQPL Challenges

- Diluted talent pool, not enough players of sufficient quality to maintain a high intensity competition and get the best out of players each week
- Not enough qualified coaches to ensure that technical outcomes are being delivered
- Limited pool of appropriately qualified coaches means that costs to participate increase due to supply and demand of coaches
- Competing player interests and conflicts with school football
- Clubs losing lifelong club players to other clubs as they are unable to offer an appropriate level of competition to players that might not progress from U20 / U18 to First Team football

NPL Women's Challenges

- Inability for clubs to field ALL teams in NPL Women's: U13, U15, U18, Seniors.
- Inability of clubs to maintain adequate player rosters with players playing more than one match per day across age groups
- Poor field space allocation with minimum field space for NPL Women's teams not adequately provided for training
- Attention to detail is poor across specifics of NPL Women's administration e.g. No female team coaches listed, no FFA numbers listed
- No scholarships provided / documented across the NPL Women's age groups
- Absence of Technical Director involvement across the NPL Women's at some clubs
- Absence of Governance around documents submitted: Business Plan, Organisational Chart, Fee Structure, AGM Minutes, Annual Report etc.

Performance and Technical Gap Analysis

Football Queensland undertook a deep dive investigation into better understanding the performance differential across the NPL Men's, NPL Women's and FQPL. Whilst many aspects of performance were investigated and analysed, this particular graph clearly demonstrates there is not a material performance outcome between the top four clubs in the NPL Women's with a very tight goal difference of 1.0 in 2020. Similarly, the bottom four clubs have very close performance outcomes, and whilst it is double the goal difference of the top four clubs it remains reasonable at 2.0. However, when a club in the top four plays a club in the bottom four the goal difference blows out to well over 5. When viewed in line with other known challenges in the NPL Women's, it highlights further opportunities need to be explored to ensure the league performs as intended.

NPL Women's Goal Difference Summary 2016 - 2020					
Comparison / Year	2020 YTD*	2019	2018	2017	2016
No. of Teams	11	13	14	10	11
Top 4 vs Top 4	1.00	1.58	2.50	2.17	1.75
Top 4 vs Bottom 4	5.25	5.18	5.59	4.56	6.90
Bottom 4 vs Bottom 4	2.00	2.42	3.00	1.75	2.50
All Teams	3.18	3.38	3.54	3.51	4.22

* as at 9th August 2020

What you told us:

We asked the following 2 questions:

- 1 With a performance gap across the existing league structure, what changes should be made to ensure clubs/teams are playing teams of similar performance on a regular basis?
- 2 With a differential of technical outcomes across the league, what changes should be made in order to deliver improved player development opportunities?

NPL Men & FQPL

Senior competitions should be based on a best v best principle. – FQPL club

There should be promotion and relegation with a minimum criteria. – NPL Men's Club

We need transparency of pathways into Seniors as part of a club's star rating. – NPL Men's club

Coaching standards need to be improved at club level. – FQPL club

Senior competition split into 3 tiers with 10 teams. NPL1, 2 and 3. – FQPL club

There should be more focus on 18's and 20's competitions. – NPL Men's club

Less than 12 teams should be in a league because a greater number just dilutes the league. – NPL Men's Club

NPL Women

There should be two tiers of competitions with eight teams in each. – NPL Women's Club

Two eight team competitions would allow for promotion and relegation. – NPL Women's Club

Funding allocation should be monitored and enforced. – NPL Women's club

Less clubs will mean better coaches and better players. – NPL Women's club

Improve the standard of the league competition by considering the number of teams and age groups. – NPL Women's Club

Having a 2 tiered comp each with 8 teams per competition. – NPL Women's club

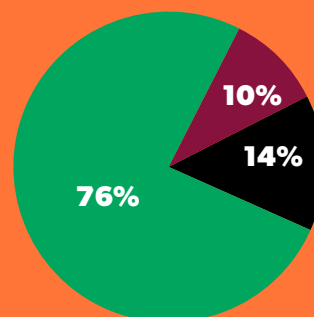
Competition Structure

The feedback obtained during the consultation process clearly identifies the importance of enabling promotion and relegation for clubs across the football ecosystem who are aspirational. It is clear from the results that the football community seeks a greater understanding about the technical outcomes that clubs are striving to deliver.

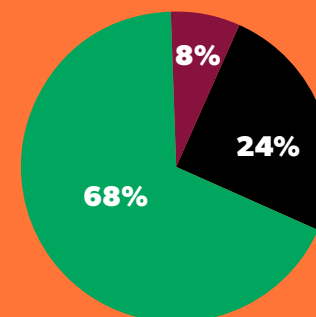
Do you agree with promotion and relegation across the entire football pyramid in Queensland?

Yes No Unsure

NPL Men & FQPL

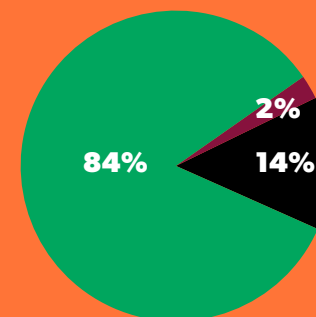
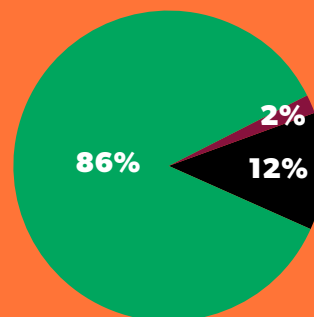


NPL Women



Do you agree that there should be greater transparency around the quality of technical services and programs delivered across all clubs?

Yes No Unsure

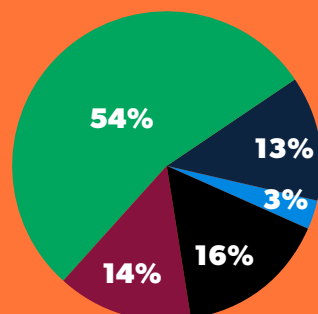


Competition Structure cont.

Changes to the top levels of competition appear to be clearly stated by the football community, with the majority seeking changes for the 2021 season.

NPL Men & FQPL

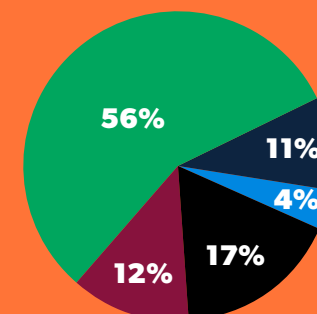
Do you believe FQ needs to make changes to improve the NPL and FQPL competition and if so when do you think changes should be implemented?



- No changes required: **16%**
- 2020: **14%** ● 2022: **13%**
- 2021: **54%** ● 2023 or beyond: **3%**

NPL Women

Do you believe FQ needs to make changes to improve the NPL competition and if so when do you think changes should be implemented?



- No changes required: **17%**
- 2020: **12%** ● 2022: **11%**
- 2021: **56%** ● 2023 or beyond: **4%**



We asked the following 2 questions:

- 3 With demonstrated deficiencies in compliance across NPL, what measures should be implemented in order to improve outcomes in this area?
- 4 With clear feedback that technical criteria should not be reduced in order to reduce costs, what changes should FQ make that better define technical performance in a transparent way?

What you told us:

NPL Men & FQPL

There should be pre-determined criteria that clubs can work towards. – *FQPL club*

Technical compliance should be prioritised. – *NPL Men's Club*

There needs to be consequences for not complying, including reviews and warnings as well as steps to help meet criteria. – *NPL Men's club*

FQ should be communicating and educating the public on clubs' compliance. – *NPL Men's Club*

FQ should support clubs in understanding the compliance requirements and then how to meet them. – *FQPL club*

There should be consistency of compliance requirements over a longer period of time to allow clubs to build and maintain their level of compliance. – *NPL Men's club*

NPL Women

The introduction of Club Ambassadors is a good initiative. – *NPL Women's Club*

FQ should be working more closely with clubs across all programs and through dedicated coach educators. – *NPL Women's Club*

Providing the technical audit to parents would be beneficial so they understand what criteria clubs are trying to meet. – *NPL Women's club*

There must be ongoing monitoring and accountability of rating criteria. – *NPL Women's Club*

There should be development of a relevant ranking/rating system that best conveys the standard of the club. – *NPL Women's club*

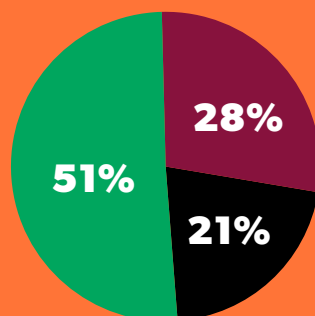
Pathways Feedback

While most are satisfied with their experience in the NPL Women's competitions, only half are able to see what the player journey looks like. In its current format, less than half of the players in the NPL Men's believe that they have an opportunity to progress their football career, while only half of the coaches believe that the current competition format is suitable and effective in delivering player development.

NPL Women

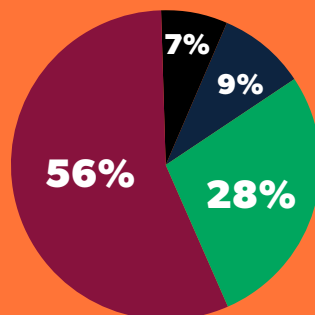
Do you believe there is a clear path for your playing career at your club?

● Yes ● No ● Unsure



Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience in your competition?

● Very satisfied: 28%
● Fairly satisfied: 56%
● Unsure: 7%
● Fairly dissatisfied: 9%
● Very dissatisfied: 0%

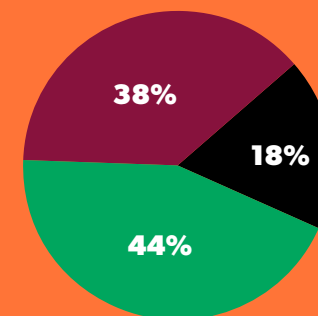


NPL Men & FQPL

Do you believe NPL is a pathway to the A-League or other career opportunities in football?

● Yes ● No ● Unsure

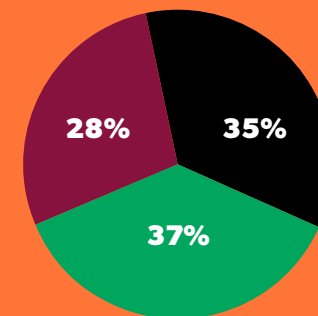
Players' response



Do you believe NPL is a pathway to the A-League or other career opportunities in football?

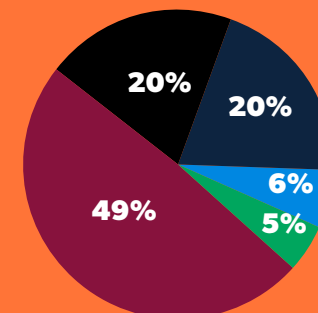
● Yes ● No ● Maybe

Coaches' response



How satisfied are you with how the competition structure facilitates player development for your club?

● Very Satisfied: 5%
● Fairly Satisfied: 49%
● Unsure: 20%
● Fairly Dissatisfied: 20%
● Very Dissatisfied: 6%



Coaches' response

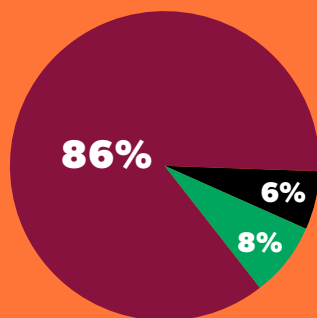
Standards

Participants across all segments of the NPL structure have been very clear in their feedback regarding their expectations of a high quality football experience. Higher standards that improve outcomes are expected. Most indicated that they would not be willing to accept a decrease in standards to lower costs. This leads to the ultimate paradox that is faced by the game - how do we improve the overall experience and increase participant outcomes without raising costs or compromising the expected standards?

NPL Women

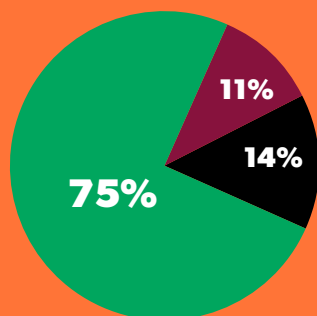
Do you believe the standards of NPL should be lowered if some costs are lowered?

Yes No Unsure



Do you believe the standards of the NPL should be raised to improve technical and development outcomes?

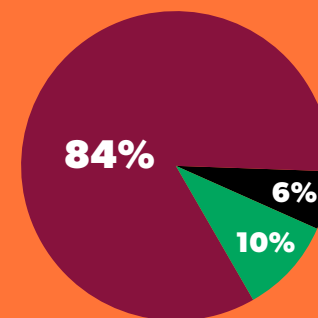
Yes No Unsure



NPL Men & FQPL

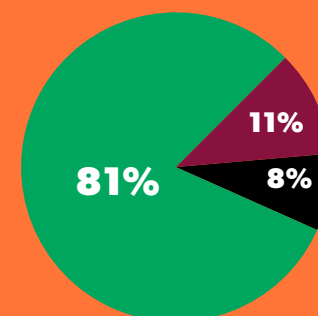
Do you believe the standards of NPL/ FQPL should be lowered if some costs are lowered?

Yes No Unsure



Do you believe the standards of the NPL/FQPL should be raised to improve technical and development outcomes?

Yes No Unsure





NPL Reform Opportunity

With the NPL Men's and NPL Women's senior leagues positioned as the national competition underpinning the A-League and W-League, it is imperative that these competitions are delivered at the highest quality and competitiveness possible. This will ensure that Queensland is able to provide a platform for players to push their claims for the opportunity to progress to the relevant national league or beyond.

Clubs were very clear in their feedback, that in order to create an environment where players and teams are tested week in and week out there is a need for the rationalisation of the NPL Men's and NPL Women's competitions and the subsequent leagues below.

The consensus is that the following competition structures are the optimal league environments in order to deliver the best opportunity for player development.

The NPL Men's competition could be made up of three (3) tiers of ten (10) clubs, playing 3 rounds (27 matches), with promotion and relegation across all levels of competition as well as in and out from competitions below:

- NPL – 10 Teams
- FQPL 1 – 10 Teams
- FQPL 2 – 10 Teams



The performance data and result analysis that has been undertaken in regards to the NPL Women's competition reveals strong consensus feedback from clubs that there are too many teams in top tier of the NPL Women's making it uncompetitive.

NPL Women's clubs provided very telling responses when asked what changes needed to be made to ensure that there is a competitiveness across the whole of the league and that players are afforded the opportunity to play in competitive and meaningful matches every round.

The overwhelming feedback provided by the NPL Women's clubs was to reduce the number of teams in the NPL Women's senior competition to eight (8) with a further eight (8) teams placed into a second division with promotion and relegation to occur between these leagues but also through to the community level leagues below to provide opportunity for all players and clubs to play in the most appropriate level:

- NPL Women's – 8 Teams
 - FQPL Women's – 8 Teams
-



REFORM 4

Affordability



Affordability



We talked about Affordability across Queensland:

When discussing affordability of the game in Queensland and the ways in which it is funded, the following was considered:

- The strategic imperative in forming strong partnerships with Government and Corporate sector
- A more affordable structure of the talent pathway
- Transparency across clubs and private academies
- Licensing of FQ approved talent programs
- Team trials and their implication for cost
- Club development initiatives to build capacity in clubs
- Player salary transparency

Affordability Challenges



We talked about the challenges regarding affordability of the game:

The challenges to be addressed

- Parts of the sport for many Queenslanders are too expensive
- For a smaller cohort of players in the talent pathway, the game currently does not represent value for money
- The existing licensing and competition structure in part contributes to the unaffordability of the talent pathway
- The impacts of the multi-layered governance structure of the game drive unnecessary costs into the oversight of the game
- The fragmented administrative structure of the game facilitates and embeds duplication of services across the administrative layers

What you said

- “There is a need for more government funding.” – Stanthorpe club
- “Processes and systems are too complex.” – Brisbane club
- “We are lacking influence over government decision makers due to inconsistent messaging.” – Rockhampton club
- “Processes are not simple enough.” – Mackay club
- “Our game is lacking financial support from government and sponsors.” – Mackay club
- “There are currently too many layers of governance adding unnecessary costs to the game.” – Sunshine Coast club
- “The value proposition of our game is not clearly explained.” – Gold Coast club
- “We need to paint a better picture of what value is.” – Gold Coast club

We asked the following 2 questions:

- 1 How can we make football in Queensland more affordable and better value for money for participants?
 - 2 What would a better structure for football in Queensland look like in 2020+?
-

What you told us:

Football should be seen to be more streamlined and centralised by government to capture more government funding.
– *Sunshine Coast club*

Funding from top down, not bottom up. – *Stanthorpe club*

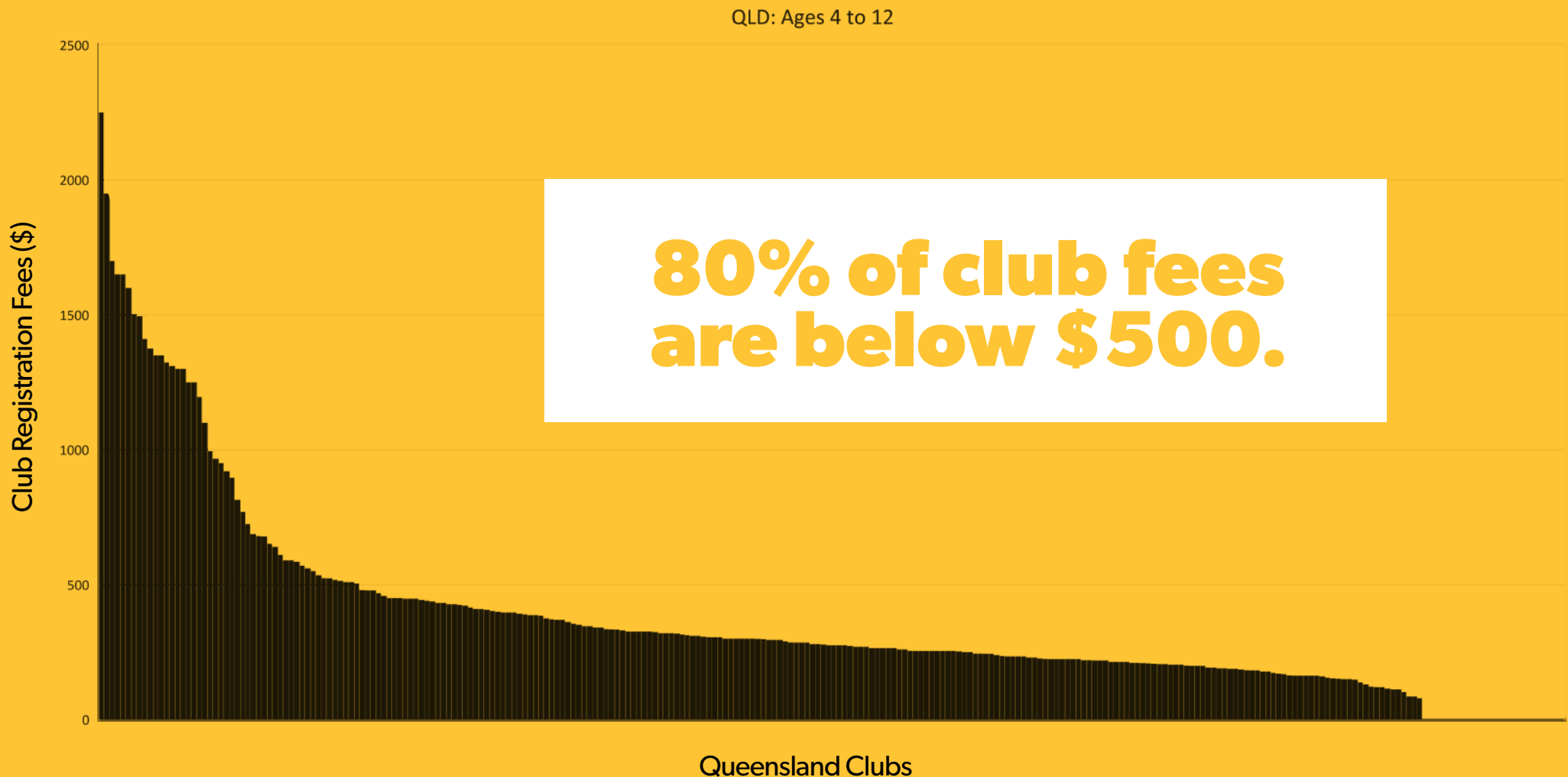
We need a more holistic governance approach and more zones sitting under one board, leading to more continuity across regional areas and bargaining ability. – *Townsville club*

Source alternative revenue i.e. sponsors to offset administration cost. – *Brisbane club*

We need implementation at local level accessing central services. – *Brisbane club*

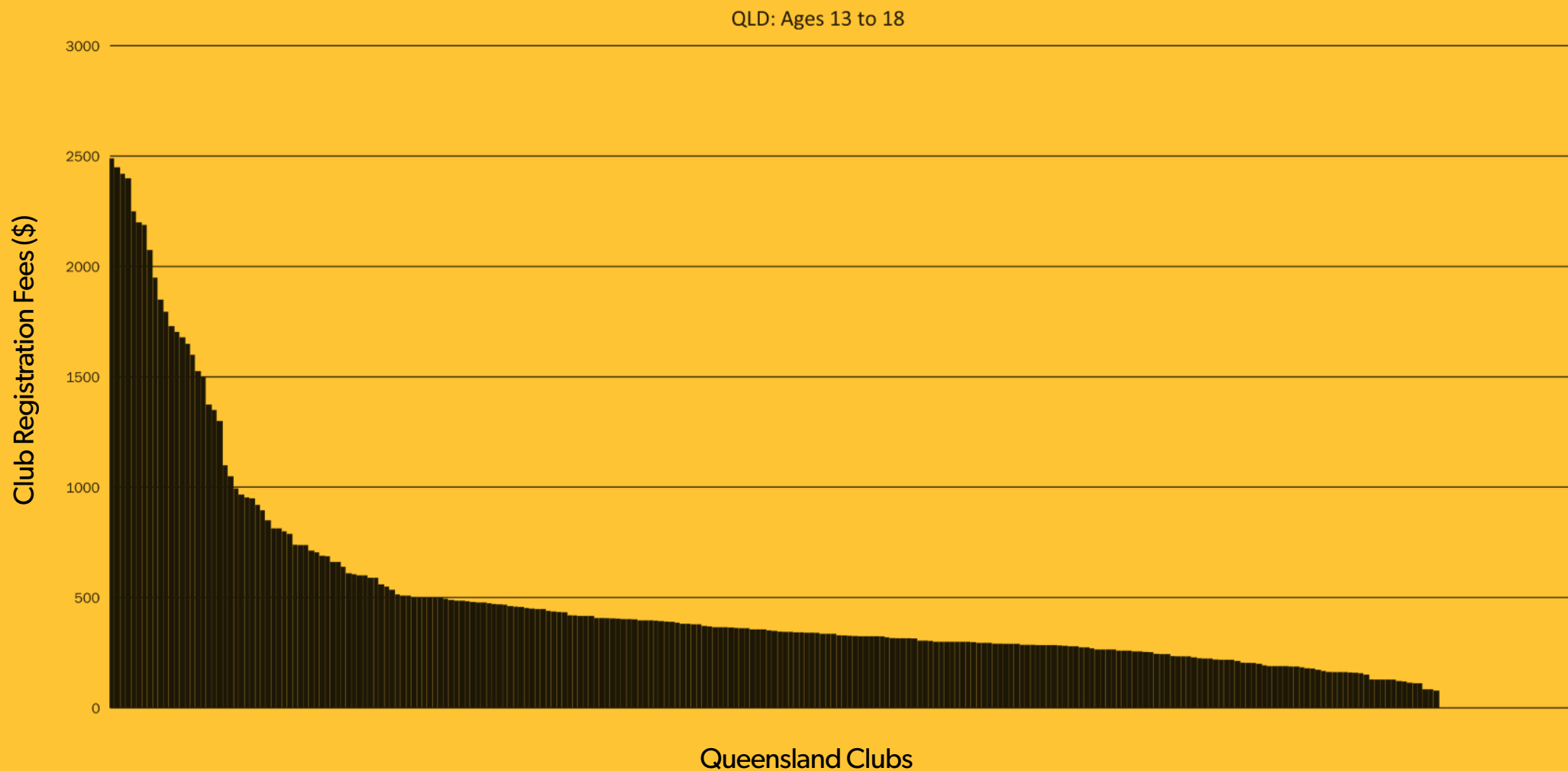
Community Costs

In order to investigate affordability we needed to determine accurately what a map of club registration fees actually looks like across Queensland. It is clear from the data that the vast majority of clubs deliver football in an affordable way. A small minority of clubs' registration fees exceed \$1000 for a season of football with the vast majority delivering a season under \$500.



Community Costs cont.

For age groups between 13 and 18, whilst the data shows fees closely align with the junior ages categories, the vast majority of clubs still deliver football in an affordable way however the proportion of clubs above \$500 increases slightly and a minority of clubs’ fees exceed \$1500 for a season of football.



NPL Junior Costs

Here is a deep dive analysis shown to clubs at the Brisbane consultation sessions that interrogates the cost base of NPL clubs and constructs overall averages and means of individual cost line items. The fee breakdown demonstrates where the costs lie and demonstrates cost on a per session basis. At an average of \$18.50, the per session fees are found to be more than reasonable for the high level and the quality of the services being provided however due to the extensive number of contact sessions and season length, the fee base builds to a level that is out of reach for some.

It is important to note that whilst there is a high disparity between the highest and lowest fees across the NPL Juniors, lower fees do not always correlate with inferior quality. Whilst true that clubs with higher fees often provide superior services in both number and standard, some lower priced clubs still provide great technical products. Some lower priced clubs achieved lower prices due to the fact they have been able to unlock the key to achieving additional revenue streams outside of registration fees, ultimately further demonstrating the critical nature that revenue plays in placing downward pressure on fees.

JUNIOR NPL FEES CHARGED				COST PER SESSION	
	AVG	LOW -	HIGH +		
UNDER 13	\$2,264.82	\$1,300.00	\$2,800.00	CONTACT SESSIONS PER SEASON	123
UNDER 14	\$2,276.59	\$1,300.00	\$2,800.00	AVERAGE FEES CHARGED PER SESSION (BY CLUB)	\$18.51
UNDER 15	\$2,276.59	\$1,300.00	\$2,800.00	AVERAGE COST BASE PER SESSION	\$15.79
UNDER 16	\$2,276.59	\$1,300.00	\$2,800.00		

FQ & Club NPL Costs

This analysis into NPL Junior fees looked at all clubs across the NPL junior space and analysed their cost bases. The data shows what the averages are across NPL Juniors and in particular allows us to better understand the overall impacts the various components of the game contribute to the cost of delivery.

AVERAGE NPL JUNIORS MENS FEE MODEL

FIXED

FQ

	COST PER PLAYER	COST PER TEAM
• FQ Licence Fee	\$66.96	\$1,071.43
• FQ Player Registration Fee (inc insurance)	\$38.50	\$616.00
• FFA National Registration Fee (Jnr)	\$14.00	\$224.00
• FQ Competition Fee (Jnr)	\$35.50	\$568.00

\$154.96	\$2,479.43
8% TOTAL COSTS	

GAME

	PLAYERS	TEAM
• Match Officials	\$117.29	\$1,876.65

\$117.29	\$1,876.65
6% TOTAL COSTS	

VARIABLE

CLUB

	COST PER PLAYER		COST PER TEAM
• Coaching Costs	\$500.00	26%	\$8,000.00
• Playing & Training Kits	\$240.00	12%	\$3,840.00
• Field Maintenance / Infrastructure Program	\$135.00	7%	\$2,160.00
• Utilities	\$120.00	6%	\$1,920.00
• Administration Staff	\$120.00	6%	\$1,920.00
• Technical Staff	\$200.00	10%	\$3,200.00
• Club Operating / Equipment Costs	\$125.00	6%	\$2,000.00
• Team Medical	\$125.00	6%	\$2,000.00
• Club Media / Marketing	\$80.00	4%	\$1,280.00
• Transaction Costs	\$25.00	1%	\$400.00

Club Cost Base	\$1,670.00		\$26,720.00
	86% TOTAL COSTS		

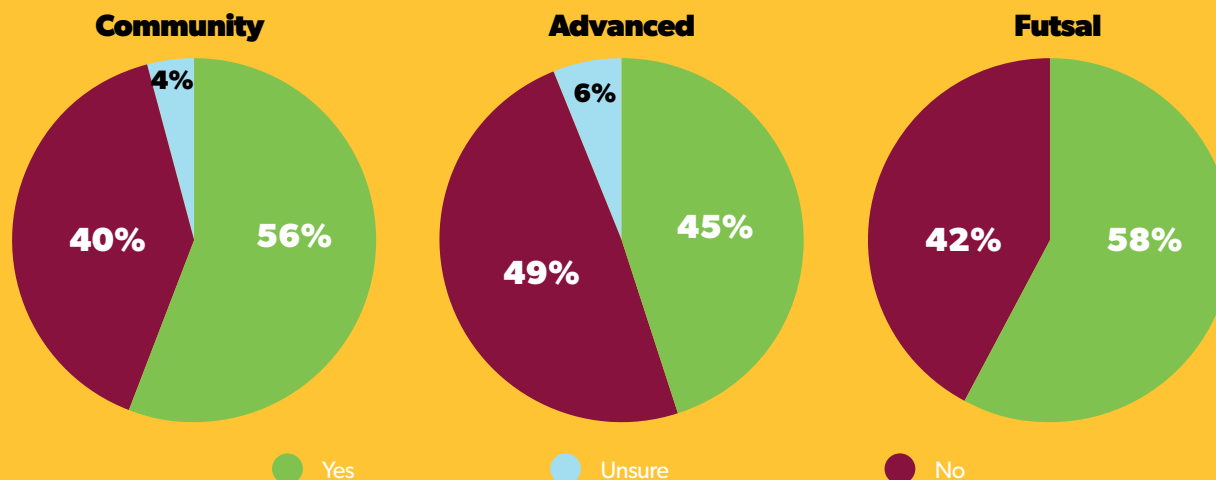
CLUB, GAME & MF TOTAL COST BASE

PER PLAYER	PER TEAM
\$1,942.26	\$31,076.08

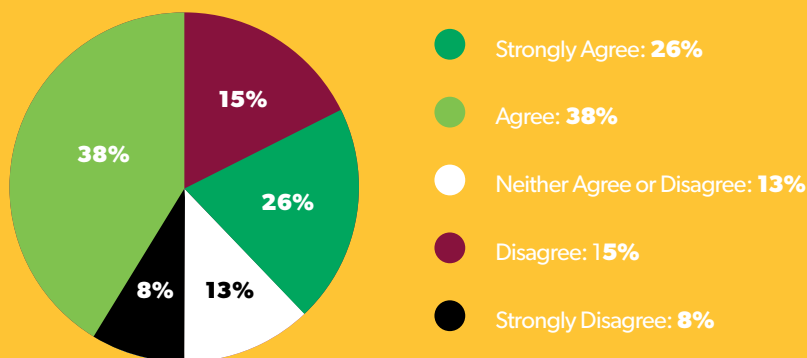
AVERAGE FEES CHARGED BY CLUB

PER PLAYER	PER TEAM
\$2,276.59	\$36,425.41

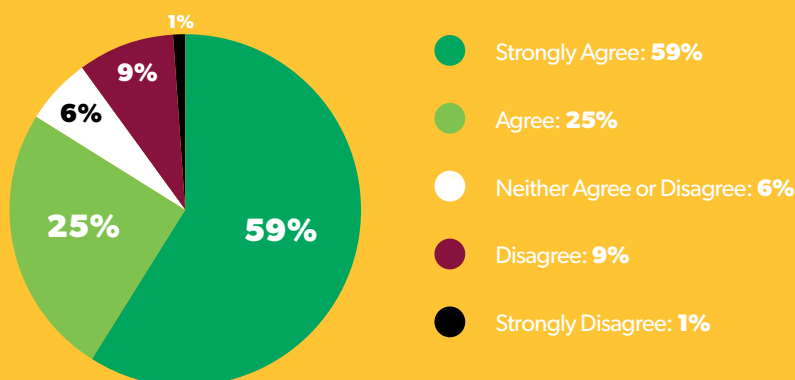
Do you think you have a good understanding of where your participation fees go?



Great administration and efficiently run organisations place downward pressure on costs which allow reinvestment into the game – how strongly do you agree?



Participation helps drive value, interest and partnership opportunities with Government and corporate sector, placing downward pressure on costs and driving investment back into the game – how strongly do you agree?



Affordability: What you told us



The consultation sessions canvassed opinion on what is a key area of focus for football stakeholders right across Queensland, with extensive discussions again resurfacing the common view that removing duplication and governance layers would have a material impact on placing downward pressure on fees.

There were mixed views on what the most appropriate solutions were however there was common ground found when it came to changing the perception of the cost of football. There was a strong sense that across the game, the vast majority of playing fees were very much affordable however the very small minority of advanced clubs dominated the affordability discussion.

Conversations took place around efforts across the game to reduce costs, bringing to light the realities around the fundamental and critical role that revenue plays in placing downward pressure on fees. Costs can only be brought down so far and cost bases for clubs differ dramatically depending on which local government area a club is located in.

Numerous stakeholders said that individual clubs and the game's value proposition can be better explained to participants – with messaging to highlight improving facilities being delivered and more advanced coaching resources being delivered – while some encouraged clubs to be more open about registration fee breakdowns and transparent about any junior registration fees going towards senior player wages.

As for addressing the game's overall funding model, it was noted that an optimal top-down approach can only be achieved with greater government investment and commercial partnerships. It was noted that success in these areas was linked to administrative reforms and single points of accountability on commercial and government partnerships. Proposals varied as to how to manage the increased revenue from these streams but prominent areas for targeting affordability included reducing the costs of coach education and subsidising financially disadvantaged participants who could benefit from a scholarship system.

One common piece of feedback was support for a more formal transfer compensation scheme that would reward clubs and incentivise youth development within a streamlined and clear player pathway framework. It was noted that work is being conducted by the FFA in this space.

Common Themes



Prioritise reform to unlock government funding and corporate partnerships



Reposition football narrative to communicate value proposition of what's being delivered



Streamline and reform junior (8-12) development pathway to be more accessible and affordable

Secondary Themes



Introduce transparency measures to monitor club fees and establish value for money programs against set criteria



Deploy technology to deliver coaching courses more frequently across the state and in more affordable way



Affordability Reform Opportunity

An understanding that some parts of the game do not represent value for money served as a central motivation for the entire Future of Football 2020+ process.

Better affordability ultimately hinges on reforms to governance, administration and competitions being successful agents for change.

Fewer governance layers, reduced role duplication in administration and a new competition structure which frees clubs from certain licensing and compliance constraints have all been identified as ways to drive down costs.

Increasing revenue into the game matters equally and it is here that football in Queensland needs a single unified voice to strategically lobby for complementary commercial partnerships and government investment.

It is critical in this regard, as multiple stakeholder groups noted, that the game effectively communicates its true value proposition, and clubs will have to support these efforts by committing to full transparency over fee structures and program delivery.

With this in-depth guidance at hand, football can collectively set a course towards unlocking its potential.



The Next Steps

Football Queensland will continue to engage all members of the Queensland football community throughout the second phase of consultation before the release of the First Report, which will seek to outline a series of recommendations to be rolled out over a period of time and based on feedback gathered through the consultation effort.

The recommendations based on the four key focus areas of Governance, Administration, Competitions and Affordability will provide an overview of the future direction of the game in Queensland beyond 2020 before the release of an Implementation Plan which will outline action plans and delivery timelines.



Football Queensland Ltd

ACN 063 925 333

Head Office

Meakin Park, 187 Meakin Road
SLACKS CREEK, QLD 4127

Postal Address

PO Box 79, Kingston, QLD 4114

Phone

07 3208 2677

Fax

07 3290 4351

Website

www.footballqueensland.com.au