

FOOTBALL QUEENSLAND

# 2024 - 2026 REFEREE STRATEGY

---



FOOTBALL  
QUEENSLAND

# CONTENTS

- 04 Purpose
- 05 Foreword
- 05 Strategic Objectives
- 06 Goals & Principles
- 07 Strategic Pillars
- 08 Pillar 1 - Recruitment & Outreach
- 12 Pillar 2 - Pathways & Opportunities
- 16 Pillar 3 - Retention & Engagement
- 20 Pillar 4 - Training & Development
- 24 How Success will be Measured
- 25 Annual Targets



# PURPOSE

Football Queensland has set a clear strategic objective. If our game is to achieve its participation targets, then we must have 3,600 referees officiating all forms of football, inclusive but not limited to; Futsal, Walking Football, Girls United, Q-League and other social offerings in Queensland by 2026. To successfully accomplish this goal, a well-defined roadmap of clear operational tasks is imperative.

With the number of participants in football across Queensland continuing to grow strongly, the frequency of games without a designated FQ referee is also increasing, which poses significant risks to both our sport and participants.

Along the growth in referee numbers, we must continue to cultivate a shift in culture between and across stakeholder groups. Fostering a One Football, One Team, One Game mentality, breaking down any divisions between players, participants and supporters, so that all understand how critical referees are to the game and its future.

Across 2021 - 2023, each year over 50% of first year referees were lost to the game and have not returned to refereeing.

To sustain the growth and prosperity of football in Queensland, further drive, resources and investment is required to expand and retain our pool of referees.



## Acknowledgement of Country

Football Queensland acknowledges the First Nations people whose lands we officiate on. We embrace the Traditional Owners' continued cultural and spiritual connection to Country and pay respect to their ancestors and descendants who continue to inspire us.

# FOREWORD

Embarking on a transformative journey to grow and elevate referees in Queensland, our 2024–2026 Referee Strategy underscores the profound influence match officials wield over the long-term success of our game. Regardless of football’s tier, from community to elite, the pivotal role of each match official in Queensland cannot be overstated. Without attraction, enabling, unification and protection of all match officials, the potential for our sport’s growth remains hindered. It is imperative that we dismantle divisive cultures and mentalities especially those of “us vs them” to ensure we can reach our full potential.

Our ambition is clear: to unite the referee community, nurturing a sense of cohesion and prioritising the well-being of each match official. Together, our shared objective is to be bold, ambitious, and enabling, attracting diverse talents and fostering environments that champion unity and a collective vision of high performance across all levels.

This strategy boldly outlines aspirations for 50/50 gender parity within our referee cohort while aiming to expand our referee base to 3,600 referees across all formats of football by the end of 2026. We want to ensure that our referees are put on the world map and given global recognition by officiating international and national level games. I am confident that this strategy eloquently details the ‘how’ and provides the solid foundations for our success.



**Andy Allan**  
General Manager – Strategic  
Game Development & Referees

FQ 2024 - 2026 REFEREE STRATEGY

# OBJECTIVES



3,600 FQ Registered referees across all formats of football in Queensland



50/50 Parity - 1,250 more female referees in Queensland



Develop clear pathways for all referees, educators & match day coaches



Queensland referees represented at every level of refereeing globally



# PRINCIPLES



## ATTRACT

Make refereeing attractive and accessible for anyone and everyone.



## ENABLE

Develop enabling environments for all referees, aiming for our objective of 50/50 Gender Parity.



## UNIFY

Have consistent standards and development opportunities for all referees across Queensland.



## PROTECT

Ensure referees feel safe, supported and valued whilst having a great experience.



# STRATEGIC PILLARS

Objective: 3,600 Football Queensland Registered Referees by 2026



### 1. Recruitment & Outreach

#### Our Ambitions

Reimagine how we recruit new talent, diversifying our referee community and expanding our reach outside of the current football community.

Ensuring a vibrant and enabled pool of referees for the future.



### 2. Pathways & Opportunities

#### Our Ambitions

Show a clear and well-articulated diverse pathway for referees, not only on the field but also off it.

Embracing innovative opportunities, we aim to create a community that thrives on continuous growth and a shared passion for the game.



### 3. Retention & Engagement

#### Our Ambitions

Ensure that our referees are protected, supported and recognised.

We will showcase and recognise the invaluable contributions that our referees make within the community.



### 4. Training & Development

#### Our Ambitions

Foster a sense of cohesion and continuous improvement within the referee community.

Through the use of cutting-edge training programs, technology integration and a supportive learning environment.

Our vision is to **create a thriving, highly skilled & sustainable community of referees** who are valued, supported and motivated. We aim to foster an environment that attracts new and existing referees and supports them to maintain long term engagement within football and the referee community.



### PILLAR 1

# RECRUITMENT & OUTREACH

## Our Commitment

Without more well trained and equipped referees our game will not reach its full potential. We are committed to achieving our objective of 3,600 referees and 1250 more female referees across all formats of football such as; futsal, walking football, Q-League and Girls United by 2026. We will work hard to break down barriers between referees and clubs as we truly believe this is a crucial element for our long term and sustainable growth of our game. We will actively seek a more diverse representation across our referee community, implementing engaging outreach programs to draw in new officials. Our goal is to ensure inclusivity at every level of refereeing, whilst fostering a sense of belonging among all referees. We are committed to being bold, ambitious and innovative whilst continuing to challenge the status quo.

## What We'll Do

1. Deliver targeted recruitment campaigns that attract a diverse pool of referees. i.e. Identify clubs to deliver referee courses, education days etc.
2. Deliver targeted recruitment campaigns specifically designed for Female Referees.
3. Deliver a 'MiniRefs' (club-based referees) Program to bring referees into the game at a younger age through an easier and earlier entry point with the vision to transition those referees to complete their C3 – Junior Match Official Course and become competitive football referees.
4. Deliver a program which encourages senior players to transition into a referee once they look to retire from competitive football & futsal. This could look like an expedited pathway for ex-senior community or professional players.
5. Deliver a school referee program which enables us to educate school students and turn them into referees. This will be achieved by developing strong school partnerships and integrate referee programs into school physical education curricula and extracurricular activities.
6. Deliver a higher education partnership program which aims to bring in more 'senior' level referees.
7. Create a referee referral system to encourage new referees to join the game.
8. Host referee activations which allows the potential to recruit new referees by showing them what refereeing is all about in a supportive environment.
9. Ensure that all our published collateral appropriately reflects the wider football community.
10. Deliver a campaign to reengage the disengaged, by looking to connect with ex referees especially if they left when they were junior referees and look to bring them back into the fold.
11. Deliver a clear value proposition to recruit mentors, match day coaches and educators. Clearly articulate what their role is and how it has a major effect on each referee's career.
12. Recruit retired or close to retiring match officials to become mentors, match day coaches and educators. Allowing us to tap into the knowledge and experienced they have, leveraging their expertise to guide the next generation of referees.

## What Does Success Look Like



3,600 referees across all formats of football by 2026.



1,250 more female referees by 2026.



Established 'MiniRefs' program with over 1,500 referees in the program.



Established school partnerships program with 75 schools signed up to our schools program.



400+ Community Level 3 & 4 Senior & Junior Match Official courses delivered.



90% of Community Level 3 & 4 Senior & Junior Match Official course participants actively referee.



Every participant in the FQ Academy (players) to be an accredited referee.





## PILLAR 2

# PATHWAYS & OPPORTUNITIES

## Our Commitment

We understand 'it's hard to be, what you can't see' and for that it is our commitment to develop clear, articulate and easy to understand pathways for our referee community that include diverse opportunities for growth. We understand that a vast majority of referees, referee the game because they simply love it. However, there is a determination from many of our ambitious referees to move through the 'ranks' and make it to the elite levels of our game. We recognise that inclusion goes beyond on-field officiating and encompasses a broad spectrum of roles, talents and backgrounds. We will ensure that all match officials & match day coaches across our state have equal access to pathways and opportunities, irrespective of their location, origin or experience level.

## What We'll Do

1. Deliver a region by region exchange program, which aims to give referees more opportunities within different areas of QLD, and ultimately a pathway to our top tier levels of football.
2. Implement a clear and well-articulated pathway, showcasing a 'referees' journey' from the start all the way to the elite levels of football.
3. Deliver a clear and well-articulated pathway for match day coaches, mentors & educators.
4. We will continue to work closely with each of our regions to bring our most talented match officials into our Football Queensland Referee Academy.
5. Collaborate and work closely with Football Australia to transition our Football Queensland Referee Academy members into the Football Australia Referee Academy.
6. Implement a referee ambassador program for our more experienced referees to join and support with the promotion of refereeing, conduct workshops and inspire the next generation of referees.
7. Showcase our match officials that have gone through the pathway, celebrate their successes, and give them the platform to upskill and give insights to the next generation.
8. Develop a video series showcasing our pathways and opportunities from all areas of the state and all levels of refereeing.



## What Does Success Look Like



Implementation and buy-in of our referee exchange program.



100 Referees to go through the exchange program.



Each region having a member in the FQ or FA Referee Academy.



25% of the national panels coming from QLD.



Increase the number of match day coaches.



Increase the number of referee educators.







### PILLAR 3

# RETENTION & ENGAGEMENT

## Our Commitment

Football Queensland recognises the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive community that safeguards the overall well-being of all match officials. We understand that protection of referees extends further than the physical safety and encompasses the emotional and social aspects of each referee. We are committed to providing a safe environment whilst recognising the good work our referees do. Referee retention is subjectively more important than recruitment, we strongly believe that retaining referees is paramount to the ongoing success of referees in our state and more broadly the success of our game. We will aim to protect and celebrate the commitment of our referees fostering a sense of community and engagement, statewide.

## What We'll Do

1. Conduct an annual survey of our referees statewide, to gain a stronger understanding of how our referee community are feeling and give every referee a voice to be heard along with an opportunity of shaping our future.
2. Launch comprehensive recognition programs to celebrate the achievements and milestones of all referees in QLD.
3. Implement a well-structured incentive program which rewards the commitment, and excellence amongst our referees, this program will sit outside of the already established referee pathway.
4. Introduce more networking and social events for our referees across QLD, to give each referee the opportunity to connect with peers, mentors and higher-level officials.
5. Implement a robust mental well-being support strategy for all referees to have access to.
6. Deliver a platform that allows referees to give feedback to their peers, match day coaches & mentors.
7. Continue to evolve our Protect Our Game initiative along with our Three Strikes Policy, to ensure our referees are protected and safe.
8. Establish a platform for referees to provide feedback to Football Queensland on their own experiences and any suggested improvements.
9. Implement a clear and well-articulated selection criteria which provides transparency to all referees on appointments to games, academies and special tournaments.
10. Introduce a calendar of events for each year, enabling each referee to understand what the year looks like well in advance.
11. Implement a recognition plan for our referee mentors, match day coaches & educators, which can include, certificates or awards for our mentors and assessors who contribute significantly.

## What Does Success Look Like



A retention rate of 80% of all referees, mentors and assessors.



A positive uptake of the annual survey with a minimum of 25% of all referees completing the survey.



An overall decrease in the need of our well-being service, meaning the environment for our referees is safer.



Active participation in social and networking events.



The successful launch our recognition program.





#### PILLAR 4

# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

## Our Commitment

Referees throughout Queensland deserve comprehensive and well thought out training and development programs. We are committed to providing all referees the opportunity to upskill their knowledge, share best practice and grow into the referee that they want to become. We will embrace technology to create modern and accessible learning opportunities for referees across the whole of the state. We understand that ongoing development of referees is paramount for standards of officiating to raise and for referees to feel unified within the community. We are committed to changing culture and to not take the approach of, 'it has always been done that way', we will be innovative, bold and create a safe environment for all referees.

## What We'll Do

1. Deliver enhanced training modules statewide that support and upskill all referees in handling a variety of different scenarios.
2. Deliver a first year referee training program outlining the number of coaching and mentor sessions each first year referee will receive.
3. Embrace technology platforms to run online webinars, virtual training sessions which will make learning opportunities available to all referees.
4. Utilise video analysis tools to provide feedback to referees of all levels and enhance the understanding of on field decisions.
5. Implement a mentor/buddy program where experienced referees guide and support our newer referee cohort.
6. Foster a culture of shared learning, with experienced referees imparting practical insights to enhance the learning experience of less experienced referees.
7. Provide more opportunities for referees to attend workshops, seminars and conferences to stay motivated, upskilled and up-to-date with the new techniques and ways of working.
8. Create a centralised resource hub containing educational materials for all referees to access becoming a comprehensive library of resources which is easily accessed by all.
9. Host female only coaching and development days, along with female only referee courses.
10. Work with our football community and clubs to recruit referee coordinators within club environments.
11. Deliver professional development training that ensures we create the optimal environments for success.
12. Conduct weekly in person coaching nights across every region in QLD, to enable further learning opportunities.
13. Deliver well thought out and deliberate training programs for our referee match day coaches & mentors, which will equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge and resources to be effective within the community.

## What Does Success Look Like



Weekly training sessions in each region (during season).



Weekly online training videos and modules.



75% of referees in each region attending a training session at least once a month.



80% of referees engaging in the online training videos and modules.



A unified and supportive referee community that actively engages in all learning experiences and fosters a sense of unity.



90% of referees receive a match day report and /or coaching throughout the season.



# HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

To measure success of Football Queensland's referee strategy, the following key performance indicators (KPIs) can be considered. Regularly assessing and analysing these KPIs will provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of the referee strategy and identify areas for improvement whilst ensuring the ongoing growth and success of the referee program in Queensland.



**REFEREE NUMBERS:** Track the number of registered referees over time, monitoring the progress towards the target of 3,600 referees by 2026. This will indicate growth and expansion of the referee pool.



**REFEREE RETENTION RATE:** Calculate the percentage of referees who remain active and continue to referee games over a specified period.



**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:** Evaluate the participation rates of our referee training programs and workshops. Monitor the level of skills and knowledge gained by referee through assessments.



**MATCH COVERAGE:** Monitor the percentage of games that have a designated FQ referee assigned, ensuring an adequate referee presence to maintain integrity and safety of matches.



**FEEDBACK AND SURVEYS:** Conduct regular surveys or other feedback mechanisms to gather input from all referees, clubs and broader stakeholders. Measure satisfaction levels through an NPS score.



**INCIDENTS AND DISCIPLINARY:** Track the number and severity of disciplinary actions/incidents. The less incidents means the more we are protecting our referees and have the right frameworks and policies in place.



**REFEREE PATHWAYS:** Develop a regional pathway framework and assess the progression of referees within the pathway, including their own achievements, conduct and opportunities for higher-level officiating.

## TARGETS

Strategic Pillar	Measure	2024 Target	2025 Target	2026 Target
1. Recruitment & Outreach	Achieve a total of 3,600 Referees by 2026	2,750	3,175	3,600
	Increase female referees by 1,250 to achieve a total of 1,800 female referees by 2026	900	1,300	1,800
	1,500 Participants in the MiniRefs Program	500	1,000	1,500
2. Pathways and Opportunities	25% of the National A-League Panel coming from QLD	18%	22%	25%
	100 Referees to go through our exchange program	25	35	40
3. Retention & Engagement	Achieve a retention rate of 80% in referees, mentors and assessors	70%	75%	80%
	Receive a take up of 25% of our referees to complete the annual referee survey	20%	22.5%	25%
4. Training & Development	Achieve a total of 80% of referees engaging with online training modules	70%	75%	80%
	Attain and maintain a total of 75% of referees to attend an in-person training session at least once a month	65%	70%	75%
	Have weekly training sessions set up in each region across the state.	40	40	40

