

AFL ASIA

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025



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FOREWORD



Australian football continues to grow and evolve across Asia.

Whether it is the rapid growth of female football, the continued progression of game development programs or dealing with the short-term impacts of COVID-19, it's an exciting time to be involved in our code across the continent.

By formalizing an arrangement with the AFL, the code has been presented with a unique opportunity to leverage the strength of the game's peak body to the benefit of our ever-expanding football community.

As our landscape and volunteer base continually change, it's important to have some broad strategic plans that guide us through what is a dynamic operating environment. In 2020, AFL Asia initiated a process to develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2025. This process involved consultation across the region to ensure the issues impacting on football across Asia were captured as part of our planning process.

Accordingly, this document summarises our strategic direction for the next five years, linking our purpose, vision, and values with core strategic pillars that aim to support football at all levels right across Asia.



Simon Highfield
Asia Development Manager

OUR ENVIRONMENT



The environment in which football operates within Asia is very different to anywhere else in the world, and to that of years gone by.

With 48 countries and a growing population of more than 4.5 billion in 2020, the current era is often described as the Asian Century. Asian economies are on track to become larger than the rest of the world combined, powered largely by China and India as well as smaller nations such as Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Bangladesh.

The sporting landscape across Asia is also evolving as the population and demographics change. Soccer and cricket are the most popular pursuits complemented by basketball, baseball, badminton and table tennis.

AFL is currently enjoyed in various forms across 20 Asian countries and is uniquely positioned to grow on the back of a 30-year heritage created by an enthusiastic volunteer army of both Australian expatriates and local converts. The traditional AFL countries/territories of Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia are now being joined by the growth engines of China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Philippines and Cambodia, amongst others. The code has more than 230 clubs facilitating the aspirations of more than 14 000 participants across the region.

The annual Asian Championships that begun as a cottage tournament in 2000, has grown into a major regional sporting event that brings more than 600 athletes from 20 countries into the host city over a weekend. The annual AFL China game pioneered by Port Adelaide has proven what is possible in navigating success in

Asia's largest, and most complex operating environment.

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting both tournament fixturing and the number of expatriates in the region, many member countries have refocused towards local development goals for 2020 and 2021. As the situation normalizes, the opportunity exists to expand the code with the aim of doubling our participation levels by 2025.

Within Asia, the AFL has a unique opportunity to leverage the benefits of an established brand, engage with an increasingly connected population and explore commercial opportunities to fund the game's growth. With a deep heritage, established regional footprint and committed group of volunteers, the Asian Century looks bright for the expansion of Australian football in the region.

AMBITION



Purpose

To progress the game and share its heritage and possibilities across Asia.

Vision

To be the AFL's leading international growth region.



STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS

PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

Programs tailored to introduce, recruit, transition and retain participants in our game.

COMMUNITY FOOTBALL

A vibrant and sustainable network of clubs and leagues that are at the heart of the community.

ORGANISATION & PEOPLE

A high-performing, supported and engaged network capable of managing the growing diversity in our game.

ENGAGEMENT

Media and marketing techniques that embrace modern digital platforms to communicate with stakeholders and participants.

COMMERCIAL

A revenue and commercial portfolio that funds programs and competitions, driving self-sustainability and growth.

GOVERNANCE

A well-structured organisation with great leadership and processes that promotes transparency and inclusivity, with strong foundations to build upon.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Embedding Diversity

In everything we do across gender, culture and ability.

Ultimate Collaboration

All football stakeholders working together in the region to grow the game.

Easy Accessibility

And clear pathways to participate and progress through the game.



PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS



Programs tailored to introduce, recruit, transition and retain participants in our game.

Key Priorities

- Identify sustainable opportunities that exist in the region to grow participation through school and community programs.
- Incentivize development programs through promotion, talent identification and funding.
- Provide enhanced support to Auskick coaches and coordinators via easier to access lesson plans, curriculum and coaching principles.
- Develop programming resources in language to provide greater support to local schools and communities.
- Identify role models/community leaders within targeted communities to assist in attracting those communities to the game and sustaining their participation.

2021

Maintain participation at 15 000

Explore Auskick synergies

Review curriculum requirements

2023

Increase participation to 20 000

Identify ambassador roles

Develop program curriculum

2025

Increase participation to 30 000

Ambassador program launched

Develop program curriculum in language



COMMUNITY FOOTBALL



A vibrant and sustainable network of inclusive clubs and leagues that are at the heart of the community.

Key Priorities

- Work with football clubs and leagues to find efficiencies to support the volunteer network.
- Better utilize the *Club Help* platform to support clubs and target those most in need strategically and address in a prioritized approach.
- Enhance our support of volunteers and club development activities, with particular focus on managing increasing diversity and supporting the growth of domestic junior and senior leagues.
- Proactively assist in establishing new clubs in growing communities.
- Engage those from diverse backgrounds to coaching and umpiring opportunities to assist with recruitment.

2021

Consolidate domestic leagues

Determine Asian Champs return

Scope Asia Cup concepts

2023

Expand regional leagues

Expand Champs concept

Consolidate Asia Cup

2025

Leagues in all affiliated countries

Consolidate Champs event

Annual Asia Cup fixture

ORGANISATION & PEOPLE



A high-performing, supported and engaged network capable of managing the growing diversity in our game.

Key Priorities

- Attract and recruit great people from diverse backgrounds to ensure our network reflects the diversity of the communities we work in.
- Ensure our successes are acknowledged and shared to highlight great outcomes across the continent.
- Explore synergies that exist with the AFL to expand our staffing and organizational capacity.
- Implement and embed good policies and standards across the network (Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Rules and Regulations).

2021

Identify AFL linkages

Consolidate volunteer network

Review required policies

2023

Investigate regional base

Identify local staff opportunities

Synergize AFL policies

2025

Expand organisation structure

Multiple local development staff

Holistic policy review

ENGAGEMENT



Media and marketing techniques that embrace modern digital platforms to communicate with stakeholders and participants.

Key Priorities

- Continue growing our media footprint through social channels, websites and media networks, and find synergies with the AFL Media team.
- Explore opportunities to transition social media and marketing responsibilities into the AFL system and its network.
- Establish good practices to monitor and commercialize website and social media traffic and the metrics to market our network.
- Better promote the accessible online coaching and umpiring education programs to enable greater opportunities for learning experiences.

2021

Develop communications strategy

Explore broadcast opportunities

Explore AFL synergies

2023

Refine communications approach

Execute targeted broadcast

Weekly AFL Media update

2025

Strong local media partners

Embed AFL coverage

Embed AFL Media position



COMMERCIAL



A revenue and commercial portfolio that funds programs and competitions, driving self-sustainability and growth.

Key Priorities

- Develop good commercial practices to ensure financial security for our programs and competitions.
- Support program delivery through enhanced financing and funding opportunities, including but not limited to AFL Asia's *Future Fund*.
- Identify sponsorship and funding opportunities to better commercialize AFL Asia-sanctioned events.
- Develop a five-year financial plan to ensure sustainability and future planning for ongoing programs and competitions.

2021

Finalize partnership documents

Launch *Future Fund*

Develop Financial plan

2023

Five major partners

Expand community support

Partially self-funded

2025

Eight major partners

Sustainable community partners

Fully self-funded

GOVERNANCE



A well-structured organisation with great leadership and processes that promotes transparency and inclusivity, with strong foundations to build upon.

Key Priorities

- Support the transition for the AFL Asia business to sit within the AFL.
- Finalize good governance documentation, including the AFL Asia Charter, and promote its adoption across all clubs and leagues.
- Promote collaboration across the continent to share challenges and best practices for club governance and development activities.
- Ensure sustainability is critically considered through every decision we make.

2021

Complete AFL transition

Charter adopted and implemented

Finalize Strategic Plan

2023

Expand AFL support

Enable regional compliance

Initiate regional collaboration

2025

Review AFL Asia position

Review governance documents

Renew Strategic Plan



STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY 2021-2025

Vision: To be the AFL's leading international growth region

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Embedding Diversity

In everything we do across gender, culture and ability.

Ultimate Collaboration

All football stakeholders working together in the region to grow the game.

Easy Accessibility

And clear pathways to participate and progress through the game.

PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS	COMMUNITY FOOTBALL	ORGANISATION & PEOPLE	ENGAGEMENT	COMMERCIAL	GOVERNANCE
Programs tailored to introduce, recruit, transition and retain participants in our game.	A vibrant and sustainable network of clubs and leagues that are at the heart of the community.	A high-performing, supported and engaged network capable of managing the growing diversity in our game.	Media and marketing techniques that embrace modern digital platforms to communicate with stakeholders and participants.	A revenue and commercial portfolio that funds programs and competitions, driving self-sustainability and growth.	A well-structured organisation with great leadership and processes that promotes transparency and inclusivity, with strong foundations to build upon.

VALUES – HOW WE WORK



