



RESPONSE TO REPORT

INTO GIPPSLAND FOOTBALL

12 August, 2020

BACKGROUND:

G25 Overview

In the second half of 2019, AFL Victoria engaged independent consultants ColganBauer to conduct an analysis into community football in Gippsland. The analysis was to determine the appropriate operating structure, including governance and competitions, to ensure long term growth for community football in the Gippsland Region with a view for developing a strategy for football in Gippsland called the “G25 Strategy”.

The independent consultation process commenced in November 2019 and has included a series of Town Hall Meetings, one-on-one community consultation and online meetings. The process focused on extensive engagement with the Gippsland football community. ColganBauer provided several opportunities for individuals, clubs, leagues, and participants to provide feedback and commentary on the state of football in the region.

The contents of the final report are the views and recommendations of ColganBauer and were delivered to AFL Victoria on 30 June, 2020.

AFL Victoria has reviewed the independent report and provided a response to the recommendations into Gippsland Football as part of its commitment to community football and its objective to strengthen the game in regional areas.

A focus on growing women’s football in the region and an alignment of junior/youth age bracket structure are among those recommendations considered.

The 98-page report also suggests amalgamating the Alberton Football Netball Competition into the Mid Gippsland Football Netball League competition to create a 15-club competition aimed at long-term league sustainability.

The report contains 46 recommendations for AFL Victoria.

Of those recommendations, all 46 have been identified by AFL Victoria as either worthy of implementation or already contained within an existing analysis that can be further examined in order to incorporate suggestions put forward by the report’s independent authors, Cogan Bauer.

AFL Victoria is committed to a vibrant and sustainable network of inclusive clubs and leagues across Victoria. For more than a century, Gippsland has been one of Australian Football’s strongest advocates and greatest supporters. Over many years, the region has bred, nurtured and developed some of the game’s champion coaches, players and officials.

Like many regional areas, Gippsland football faces immense challenges in maintaining its presence, its participation rate, its facilities, its leagues and its community engagement with local clubs. As a strong advocate of football’s important role in community life, AFL Victoria welcomes the report and its findings.

All recommendations from the ColganBauer report submitted to AFL Victoria on 30 June 2020 have been summarised below.

AFL Victoria's response from the report into the structure of Gippsland Football is presented below.

Recommendation P1.1

Summary

In 2019, six teams competed in the Alberton Football Netball Competition, and nine clubs in the Mid Gippsland Football Netball League. Recommendation is to amalgamate into the Mid Gippsland Football Netball League competition to create a 15-club competition. The league structure would then become an 18 round season, with an annual rotation of home and away, followed by a top-eight finals structure.

It is forecast that the Western corridor will continue to grow, but the central and southern parts of Gippsland is going to have low/ no growth highlighting the need to strengthen central Gippsland. The demographic and economic dynamics between the Southern Gippsland clubs and Mid-Gippsland are similar, while the dynamics in the Western Corridor are different.

The purpose would be to create league sustainability with smaller leagues with less financial security having a larger league size, will provide high protection for the league that may come from further shocks. The Mid Gippsland FNL structure is financially sound with a robust governance model that can accommodate the addition of the South Gippsland clubs and provide the opportunity for the South Gippsland clubs to be active members. The amalgamation of the two leagues under the Mid Gippsland governance of the MGFNL will improve the financial position for all members.

A final eight structure will ensure more teams play finals, increase the number of finals played to nine – which should also improve the financial health of the competition.

AFL Victoria Response

After an analysis of the league structures across the region for the 2021 season, AFL Victoria will adopt the recommendation to move the Alberton clubs into the Mid-Gippsland Football Netball League for the 2021 season. AFL Victoria see this strategy as providing long term financial and competition security for clubs in both leagues. The 2021 league format will provide an enhanced product for sponsorship and allow for an increased finals format if desired. AFL Victoria commit to working with both leagues to ensure the process is in the best interests of all clubs and stakeholders.

Recommendation P1.2

Summary

Shift to divisional football in the Western corridor, with the West Gippsland competition and Ellinbank League maintaining their heritage. To be implemented at the point of best fit before 2025.

Before the implementation of the divisional structure, clubs should develop the promotion/relegation criteria.

This shift will address the forecasted population trends in the western half of Gippsland, where the north-west population is growing at a faster rate than the south-west, which will impact competitive balance and the financial strength of clubs.

There are currently two levels of competition within both leagues (as measured by average club win rate over three years). By creating a divisional structure, the competitive balance across these two league's associated clubs should improve.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria endorses this recommendation but will seek further consultation with local stakeholders over the viability of this format to meet the evolving needs of the community in West Gippsland. Both AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland will engage with local leagues and clubs with the intention of determining the health and financial implications of COVID-19, and whether that position still supports a move toward a divisional football structure within the recommended timeframe.

Recommendation P1.3

Summary

Apply a reduction in salary caps to all Gippsland senior competitions. The modification to be done in conjunction with surrounding areas as this will have a direct impact on the ability of leagues to attract and retain talent. AFL Victoria to continue to review all league salary caps across Victoria annually, to ensure no senior participation shock in the regions. There also needs to be an increase in the audit of the club's salary cap positions with a new process put in place to ensure compliance.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation with a critical component to the success of community football is the health and sustainability of all clubs. There is a state-wide understanding that the costs of operating football clubs need to be explored to enable clubs to survive post COVID-19.

Recommendation P1.4

Summary

AFL Victoria to conduct a review of the player points program currently being used in Gippsland and identify improvements/revisions to incentivise junior retention and development by senior clubs.

While there is not a 1:1 relationship between every junior / senior football club in the region, the importance of forging relationships between junior and senior clubs was highlighted. To promote

these relationships and incentivise clubs to develop local talent, reviewing and adjusting the player points program to promote further the creation of junior / senior club alignment should occur. Addressing the region's challenge and concern regarding junior/youth drop-out.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will look to work with the CCSP Committee in determining whether further innovation of the rules can be explored for 2021 season. AFL Gippsland will look to utilise an existing mechanism under the Player Payment Rules that has not yet been implemented in Gippsland, but used successfully in other Regions, and will continue to monitor its effectiveness.

Recommendation P2.1

Summary

Transition all central Gippsland leagues (junior and senior) to an U14s / U17s competition model from 2021.

Leagues that would change include:

- Traralgon DJFC: Remove U16s
- Mid Gippsland FNL: Remove U16s and U18s, add U17s
- North Gippsland FNL: Remove U18s, add U17s

Lower population growth in central Gippsland areas (La Trobe Valley and Wellington), along with population centralisation will impact participation levels into the future. There is not the current participation base in the Gippsland region to be able to support the existing number of clubs and grades within Gippsland at the 14 to 18 age group. The current starting grade for junior football aligns to NAB AFL Auskick and provides a pathway for players to move into and ensure players stay playing the game. To ensure club sustainability and alignment with the youth structures, the model needs to support clubs to field a youth competition to support the transition from the junior leagues into the senior sides by aligning to the Football Netball East Gippsland's U14s / U17s structure across half the region, clubs will have greater ease to fill sides, given less overall age brackets, and promote greater sustainability (e.g. MGFNL's U18s competition only had four clubs in 2019).

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria endorses this recommendation and commits to seek further consultation with stakeholders regarding its adoption. AFL Victoria recognises the challenges faced with changing junior age group structures. Those challenges not only equate to numbers on the field, but also to the likelihood of participation of new players to the game. AFL Victoria will continue to work with stakeholders to determine the most appropriate outcome.

Recommendation G1

Summary

AFL Victoria to conduct a research study to understand factors that lead to players who leave the football system at junior and youth age groups in country regions.

Junior and youth participation was a significant issue that was expressed by most of the Gippsland football community. However, each party had varying views on the key factors that led to participation drop-off. By completing this recommendation, AFL Victoria, AFL Gippsland and the Gippsland football community will have clarity on the drivers of football drop-out, allowing programs to be developed that will have the most impact in the future.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will shortly commence a project that will canvass the input of former junior players, existing junior players, parents, coaches, and club officials to assist in identifying key areas for improvement and additional resourcing. This project will be the catalyst for the implementation of new Junior strategies.

Recommendation G2

Summary

AFL Victoria to launch an 'acquisition and retention program' – aimed at increasing junior and youth participant retention in the region. The program scope and direction to be based on the findings from the 'participation drop-off' project.

AFL Gippsland region participants have a higher drop-out rate across most age brackets between 10 and 18 years old compared to the Country Victorian average. The community also expressed this as an area of concern during consultation. Utilising the findings from the participation drop-off study ensures that tactics employed address the significant factors of the decline and provides maximum benefit from the effort invested.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will utilise the data compiled as part of the junior retention study to implement its acquisition and retention programs.

Recommendation G3

Summary

To best promote and grow women's football across the region, AFL Gippsland with AFL Victoria to develop a women's football strategy specifically for Gippsland.

In 2019, there were approximately 1.1k female participants in Gippsland compared to

approximately 11.5k male participants. Considering the strong community ties expressed regarding netball in Gippsland, AFL Victoria should create a Gippsland-specific women's football strategy. This strategy should determine how to promote best and grow women's football while remaining mindful of netball.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will commence analysis into women's football in Gippsland. Both AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland recognise the current difficulties associated with the existing format of women's football and acknowledges a greater strategy is needed to minimise the impact of extensive travel on new participants. AFL Victoria will work with AFL Gippsland and stakeholders to revise the format to ensure the rising needs of female football are appropriately met.

Recommendation G4

Summary

Greater alignment between FDM's in the region and the overall AFL Victoria model.

Currently, the Gippsland region is responsible for establishing the development plan. A model replicated across the whole of the state. AFL Victoria should be responsible for working with the regions to develop the strategy, with the regions responsible for the tactics to implement the plan.

Support from AFL Victoria could provide scale across the state in developing the tactics and providing tools to support the region.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and is currently undertaking analysis of its staffing structure to best support community football post COVID-19. As part of this work, AFL Victoria will be able to implement greater direction in its expectations of existing and future staff to allow those persons to better service those needs.

Recommendation G5

Summary

An annual plan to be developed by FDMs for programs that will run during the year. The recommendation will promote greater transparency regarding responsibilities with the FDMs will conduct yearly planning. There should be a quarterly review of progress against the plan between the FDMs/AFL Victoria/RGM.

FDMs will be able to establish their responsibilities for the year, subsequently allowing the clubs and leagues to plan for the year with greater clarity. Ongoing monitoring provides for adjustments where required and ensures accountability.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and acknowledges that, as part of the analysis of the role of Football Development Managers and grassroots staff, an enhanced annual plan with purpose, structure and KPI's is required.

Recommendation G6

Summary

Club Improvement Program (CIP) requires greater investment by AFL Victoria.

Part of the role of the FDM's remit is to deliver the CIP. The scope of the FDM role is vast and identifying someone with all the required capabilities to support club improvement is challenging.

Refreshment of the way the CIP is delivered should enable greater support to be provided to Clubs.

A 'champion model' provides the ability for specialisation and means that there is not the need to have capabilities in all areas. AFL Victoria should be responsible as the model can be leveraged to support all regions across the state.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will develop the scope of the CPI program and how it will contribute to club health and efficiencies.

Recommendation G7

Summary

Devise more targeted school programs and roll-out these programs across the region; the project aims to transition more kids into community football.

During interviews and consultation with the region, people identified that the focus for development was on Auskick age participants with a gap for older school development programs in the region.

These programs can recruit players to the game as well as enhance the capability/ enjoyment of current participants. These first phases of these programs should focus on areas where there has been seen a reduction in youth penetration, before expanding across the whole region.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and will review the priorities of its workforce with a view to achieving greater impact in primary and secondary schools. AFL Victoria will also look at what alternative innovations it can introduce to allow school staff to encourage the game of Australian football.

Recommendation G8**Summary**

Provide clarity for leagues and clubs by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of league administrators and FDMs. The role of the FDMs in Gippsland should be communicated to all stakeholders, including captured on the AFL Gippsland website.

The role of the FDMs and league administrators are linked. The role of the FDMs is funded by AFL Victoria, while the league administrators need to be financed by league fees. The current model provides ambiguity in the role that each function plays in delivering football in the region. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities that are communicated will ensure the community understands the services they should be receiving depending on their engagement with the RAC or as affiliates of AFL Victoria.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and is currently undertaking analysis of its staffing structure to best support community football post COVID-19. As part of this work, AFL Victoria will be able to implement greater direction in its expectations of existing and future staff to allow those persons to better service those needs.

Recommendation G9**Summary**

The RAC should create and hire a Club Development / Sustainability role to provide specialist support to Gippsland clubs regarding their challenges around sustainability.

This new role should be introduced to ensure clear separation of game development and club sustainability activity and reduce confusion in roles/responsibilities across the region.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and will look to develop staff and programs to deliver the required outcomes for league and club sustainability. AFL Gippsland will establish this role as a permanent fixture amongst its workforce.

Recommendation RA1.1**Summary**

To address the region's feedback regarding multiple reviews without action/ feedback, AFL Victoria set out a clear timeline for implementation of the G25 Strategy.

One of the most significant friction points between the region and AFL Victoria was regarding the number of reviews that have occurred without action or feedback. AFL Victoria should avoid a

repeat of these events. There will be several recommendations delayed by COVID that may require amendment in the future, resulting in the need for flexibility regarding implementation timing.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and recognises the importance of implementing change quickly to allow stakeholders to plan for 2021 and for recommendations to be acted upon in an efficient and timely manner.

Recommendation RA1.2

Summary

Develop a working group made up of a mix of AFL Victoria, AFL Gippsland, leagues and clubs to be responsible for the review and implementation of the recommendations.

The working group consisting of multiple stakeholder groups, will ensure the recommendations progress to implementation and consist of both a community and administrative focus. A mixed stakeholder group will also help to continue to encourage transparency across the region.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and understands the importance of the breadth of local knowledge in traversing the uniqueness of the Gippsland region. AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland will look to draw substantially on local people in a collaborative approach to change.

Recommendation RA1.3

Summary

Move to structured communications and forums with a clearly defined calendar for meetings in the region.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and AFL Gippsland has an implementation program underway. A recent survey exhibited positive results in the improvement of communications. AFL Gippsland will continue to train incoming staff in this manner.

Recommendation RA1.4

Summary

Redefine the role of the AFL Gippsland Commission to act as an advisory board setting the strategic direction for football in the region. This advisory board should consist of people from the Gippsland region. Including removing the volunteers from financial liabilities and other risks associated with being a director.

By redefining the role to focus on the strategic direction in sharpens the focus of the group, while removing the “day-to-day” administrative burden of the previous commission structure. Having local people setting the direction is essential as they have a higher level of understanding of the issues impacting football in the great.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation. It is not the desire of AFL Victoria to overwhelm volunteers with the regulatory burden of a public company. AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland will implement this recommendation to protect its local volunteers from liability whilst utilising local knowledge in key decision making.

Recommendation RA1.5

Summary

Develop a responsibilities matrix for community football in Gippsland defining the roles and responsibilities for all processes.

Consultation with the region revealed that there was a level of ambiguity regarding the roles/ responsibilities of various stakeholder groups in Gippsland. Developing a responsibilities matrix and distributing it to the region will remove ambiguity in who should be delivering each process.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will look to make the roles of those within its organisation clearer to those within the broader football industry with the aim to achieve greater clarity and efficiency in operations.

Recommendation RA1.6

Summary

AFL Victoria to support Gippsland to implement this strategic plan.

The recommendations included in this report will require additional time and resources. To deliver this plan, AFL Victoria will need to provide support to ensure operations can continue during implementation.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation. Through collaboration with AFL Gippsland, the development of the AFL Gippsland Strategic Plan will actively engage staff and stakeholders to achieve a higher standard of football programming and governance.

Recommendation RA1.7**Summary**

To ensure increased accountability from AFL Victoria regarding football in Gippsland, KPIs should be included in their performance measures relating to supporting AFL Gippsland in meeting their compliance obligations.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will refine its existing mechanisms for monitoring performance measures of its Regional Commissions and will look to implement stricter controls to ensure greater compliance and service delivery.

Recommendation RA1.8**Summary**

AFL Victoria representatives to periodically attend formal league meetings and participate in a regional working group. Invest in developing more significant ties with the region.

AFL Victoria to get a better understanding of regional issues and enhance their relationship with the region. Where appropriate attendance could be via a video conferencing tool or teleconference tool.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and has employed additional AFL Victoria staff to resource the region specifically. AFL Victoria management will develop and implement a range of KPI's to ensure a closer collaborative working relationship with the region.

Recommendation RA1.9**Summary**

Ensure that the appeals board members are communicated to the region, with the rationale for findings widely shared.

AFL Victoria nominates the appeals board from a shortlist. The sharing of the rationale for the board members and their reasoning behind decisions will provide visibility to the region.

Ensures decisions include a representative with an understanding of local issues.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation. AFL Gippsland will improve its operations to ensure that candidates are appropriately sought, and those appointments are communicated to region stakeholders in a timely manner.

Recommendation RA2.1**Summary**

Implement a continuous improvement model to refine the business processes and identify points of failure. Roll out standardised improvement practises across the RAC to identify the root cause of issues and develop initiatives to address the challenges.

The implementation will help address the RAC cost increases that have occurred in the past, with a focus on process improvement to delivering cost efficiencies.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation. AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland will work collaboratively toward implementing process improvements.

Recommendation RA2.2**Summary**

To help the RAC stabilise as quickly as possible to provide a cost-effective service offering to the region, AFL Victoria should give support in the form of additional resources and training. Other regions can use anything developed for Gippsland in other areas.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and emphasises its continued commitment to the Gippsland region. AFL Victoria has already worked to implement efficiencies across the State, including the development of hubs to drive scale and improve service delivery. With a renewed workforce model, greater emphasis on staff training will be placed to ensure greater industry efficiencies.

Recommendation RA2.3**Summary**

Undertake a baseline of all activities completed by RAC staff to understand what services to stop and what provides value.

Discussions with community members detailed that there was a level of ambiguity regarding the service offerings from the RAC. Subsequently, an activity analysis should identify processes delivered by the RAC.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and through AFL Gippsland, have begun the process of staff activity analysis across all roles.

Recommendation RA2.4**Summary**

Develop a service catalogue for RAC services with a clearly defined pricing matrix based on a clearly defined cost driver. To provide service flexibility and incentivise leagues/associations to come onboard to the RAC, implement a tiered service model, e.g. low, moderate, high service). A service catalogue of the RAC will help outline prices to leagues and improve transparency.

The reputation of the RAC in the region is currently negative, with leagues highlighting RAC costs as an issue. By providing a tiered service model with various pricing levels there will be greater flexibility for leagues should they wish to re-engage the RAC in the future.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and has begun the process of developing the RAC services catalogue.

Recommendation RA2.5**Summary**

The RAC to report through AFL Victoria (not the Commission). This change would result in the reporting line for the RAC moving from the AFL Gippsland Commission to report to the AFL Victoria country football team.

The Commission is a volunteer board – with limited time to invest in staff management. Bringing the RAC under AFL Victoria will provide

- Greater alignment between the RAC and AFL Vic
- The ability for the RAC to use AFL Victoria resources
- Increased scale benefits to the Gippsland RAC
- Enhanced staff development
- Remove administrative management from the AFL Gippsland Commission so they can focus on the competitions in the region

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation. AFL Victoria notes that it made structural changes towards the end of 2019 to facilitate greater AFL Victoria staffing within the region. Those staff, along with other AFL Victoria staff based at AFL House, will be utilised to better train and resource AFL Gippsland staff moving forward with the aim of improving services to the region.

Recommendation RA2.6**Summary**

To separate administrative and development activities, an area manager responsible for FDMs

should provide oversight over the FDM's in Gippsland and have more alignment with AFL Victoria.

Delineates the two areas between administration and football development, and ensures the focus is on development and not administrative support.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and is currently undertaking analysis of its staffing structure to best support community football post COVID-19. As part of this work, AFL Victoria will be able to implement greater direction in its expectations of existing and future staff to allow those persons to better service those needs.

Recommendation RA2.7

Summary

Improve service quality and delivery by making RAC roles more specialised. Where the scale does not exist in Gippsland look to pool resources across regions.

Under the current model, staff have a mix of skillsets and generalist capabilities. Realignment of activity allows for the development of specialisation. The recommendation should improve service quality and efficiency within the delivery of football in the region.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and recognises that the role of the RAC has departed from what was originally intended. As such, a revised format will be developed that will evolve the roles into more specialist service offerings to clubs and leagues.

Recommendation RA3.1

Summary

For all delivered services by the RAC, there should be a clear understanding of the cost to provide that service. Understanding the cost will inform the pricing structure and whether the service is viable. Based on the cost to deliver, create a pricing model for each service that the RAC will provide.

Understanding the cost of services allows the RAC to determine the appropriate charge out rate to the leagues. The change provides transparency to leagues regarding the price for specific services.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and supports greater flexibility and selection for leagues to consider outsourcing should they wish. This is in acknowledgement of the varied skillsets of volunteers and makes resources available as a supplement if required.

Recommendation RA3.2**Summary**

Separating administrative and game development funding sources, any activity that is not deemed “league administration” should not be funded by the RAC and an alternative model.

Leagues in the RAC subsidise non-league administrative services today. By removing this burden and finding an appropriate funding source, RAC cost pressures will be addressed.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and both AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland will explore innovative means for AFL Gippsland to broaden its service offering, whilst maintaining financial responsibility for its outcomes.

Recommendation RA3.3**Summary**

Analyse and update financial cost controls where appropriate to reduce spend (i.e. purchasing policies, delegations of authority). Reduces unnecessary spending, helping to improve AFL Gippsland’s financial management.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and notes that the review of its financial controls, purchasing policies and delegation of authority has commenced.

Recommendation RA3.4**Summary**

AFL Gippsland should have a greater focus on business performance, given their prior history, including implementing a strict annual planning and budgeting process to enter the new financial year.

Address the financial performance of AFL Gippsland in recent years. By having a strict annual planning process there will be a greater focus on business performance.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and notes that the review of its annual planning processes has commenced.

Recommendation RA3.5**Summary**

Establish a meeting calendar, capture critical meetings, including the AGM. Communications and forums should have a clearly defined schedule in the region – including AGMs.

Ensures AFL Gippsland has accountability to the region for communication and reporting on performance.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and work to providing the region with enhanced clarity around all future calendar events.

Recommendation RA3.6**Summary**

The five Gippsland umpire associations should continue to work closely together and identify opportunities for increased central management (i.e. HR, Finance functions, etc.). Central management should help to improve efficiency and reduce industry cost of umpiring.

There are currently five umpire associations that operate to meet the officiating needs of the region. They have worked to drive greater coordination. They should continue to work towards a central model.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will work with AFL Gippsland and the umpiring groups to find better efficiencies in their operations to support affordability of services.

Recommendation RA4.1**Summary**

Develop a community volunteer marketing campaign to encourage more people to be involved in their local sporting organisation.

Declining volunteerism and higher expectation of volunteers was a challenge raised by Gippsland community members. By promoting an increased number of volunteers through a designed marketing campaign, the issue of volunteer burnout and increased volunteer workload will reduce for existing volunteers.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will work with AFL Gippsland in a collaborative campaign to develop a community volunteer marketing program for the region.

Recommendation RA4.2**Summary**

Given the large workload expected from committee roles, a review of the club secretary role should be conducted with the view to reduce the role's workload.

Discussion with clubs and league representatives identified significant complexity had been introduced to the club secretary role. We expect reducing the workload through identifying efficiencies, higher retention, and attraction of volunteers for committee members/club secretary roles.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and notes that an analysis into the structure and support mechanisms of all club volunteer roles has already begun.

Recommendation RA4.3**Summary**

The process to manage salary caps by Clubs / Leagues should be reviewed and streamlined, this includes the audit process. Community members identified that the process to track and manage the salary cap is not efficient and time-consuming. To promote volunteerism and volunteer retention, streamline the process.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and notes that the 2021 salary cap management process for 2021 has commenced. AFL Victoria also commits to working with AFL Gippsland to better utilise existing mechanisms to ensure stronger compliance under the CCSP rules.

Recommendation RA4.4**Summary**

The process of managing player points by Clubs / Leagues should be reviewed and streamlined.

Community members identified that the process to track and manage the player points is not efficient and time-consuming. To promote volunteerism and volunteer retention, streamline the process.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will continue to work with its CCSP Working Party on continuing the relevance of the policy to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Recommendation RA4.5**Summary**

Reduction in the by-laws of the leagues will streamline administration. Greater alignment across league's by-laws should ensure that support/ advice provided by AFL Gippsland or AFL Victoria is consistent.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation and recognises the challenges associated with implementation and having all independent leagues to vote in the changes. AFL Victoria will advocate strongly for this change and will continue to promote the benefits of unified by-laws for the entire industry, including the umpiring fraternity.

Recommendation RA4.6**Summary**

Given the increasing pressure of attracting volunteers and the complexity of the roles, providing training and support will help to support volunteer retention and workload reduction.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and will look to utilise its existing resources, along with the club sustainability grant to assist with training and upskilling local volunteers.

Recommendation RA4.7**Summary**

To best prepare committee members for their role in the season ahead, a formal session should be conducted before the start of the season to outline responsibilities.

Various club representatives raised a key-person risk for their club/league given the tenure of some of the current committee members. This recommendation will address this risk in knowledge leakage, improve education and support volunteers in executing their role.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and notes that it will review the current programs that assist with training and upskilling league and club volunteers.

Recommendation RA4.8**Summary**

Review the roles required by leagues and clubs to develop an example best in class operating model for clubs and leagues.

A standardised best in class model for community clubs would help clubs to benchmark their structure against peers and identify areas for improvement, help address the increasing workload on volunteers. By establishing the roles required by leagues/clubs to demonstrate what a 'best in class' model for operating a club/league.

Due to limited volunteers, management and efficient use of their time is critical to reducing workload. By understanding what is 'best practice', clubs and leagues will be able to review and update their governance functions.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation and notes that the recent investments in the Toyota Club Help website are heavily aligned with the recommendations desires outcomes.

Recommendation RA5.1**Summary**

There should be a continued focus on salary cap reduction by clubs, with input into AFL Victoria for a more regional review of salary caps.

Reduction in salary caps reduces the cost base for clubs, helping to improve financial sustainability.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria will adopt this recommendation with a critical component to the success of community football is the health and sustainability of all clubs. There is a state-wide understanding that the costs of operating football clubs need to be explored to enable clubs to survive post COVID-19.

Recommendation RA5.2**Summary**

To improve negotiating power with suppliers, the RAC should develop a centralised procurement offering for clubs (opt-in model) with a focus on leveraging buying power across the region, e.g. tape, food and beverage contracts, equipment.

Group buying should provide a reduction in the cost per unit for the clubs, helping clubs address



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the increasing cost and revenue pressures. Implement an opt-in model to offer flexibility for clubs/leagues to participate, given the RAC's current position.

AFL Victoria Response

AFL Victoria adopts this recommendation. The AFL industry is fortunate to have the support of excellent suppliers and service providers who all offer highly competitive pricing. AFL Victoria and AFL Gippsland will seek to utilise those partnerships to pass savings on to community stakeholders.