

2023 AFL PLAYERS' ANNUAL REPORT

50

celebrating 50 years



CONTENTS

- 4 FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 4 FROM THE CHAIR
- 5 AFLPA BOARD
- 6 OUR MEMBERS
- 7 PLAYER DELEGATES
- 8 50TH ANNIVERSARY
- 10 LETTER FROM THE CEO
- 12 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT
- 14 INSIGHTS AND IMPACT REPORT
- 16 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PLAYER SUPPORT
- 20 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- 21 WELLBEING SUPPORT
- 22 ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP
- 24 CAREER TRANSITION
- 25 ACCREDITED AGENTS
- 26 TACKLE YOUR FEELINGS
- 27 AFLPA PARTNERSHIPS
- 28 MEMORABILIA AND LICENSING
- 30 SOCIAL LEADERSHIP
- 32 LADDER
- 34 CONTENT
- 36 22UNDER22
- 38 MVP AWARDS
- 40 BUSINESS OPERATIONS
- 41 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The AFL Players' Association acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 2023 AFL Players' Association Annual Report.

The last year was another historic one for our members and the game. With both Collective Bargaining Agreements for AFL and AFLW players expiring at the end of the 2022 seasons, negotiations were vital and urgent.

Coincidentally, this also took place during the AFLPA's 50th year anniversary. Officially forming in 1973, it was fitting – through the support of the players, AFLPA Board, leaders, and staff – that the most significant deal between the league and its players in the game's history was agreed in the year we raised the bat for our half-century.

There are outstanding outcomes for our members from this new agreement, some of which we haven't seen in Australian sport.

Tying our W players to a revenue share model officially enshrines all players as genuine partners in the game, ensuring both AFL and AFLW players can grow collectively with the game and enjoy each other's successes while doing so.

This five-year deal achieves significant security for our members, especially our AFLW players, who haven't had a sustained period of certainty since the pandemic first reached our shores.

On the field, our stars only grew in stature. And we honoured Marcus Bontempelli with the Leigh Matthews Trophy and Jasmine Garner with the AFLW Players' MVP Award – congratulations again to both. Impressively, Marcus and Jasmine received the gong as the players' best for the second time.

Unity is the cornerstone of our playing group, and our association continues to flourish and grow because of it. This cohesion will provide a stable platform to launch into a new period within the certainty of a five-year CBA and help all players, past and present, and the game succeed.



Patrick Dangerfield
PRESIDENT

FROM THE CHAIR

The 2023 membership year marked the 50th anniversary of the AFL Players' Association and there was appropriate recognition of the members, advisers and administrators who worked so hard over those years to build a platform that enables the current custodians of the organisation to further advance the interests of current, past and future players.

On the back of the member-endorsed corporate restructure a year earlier that saw equal AFL and AFLW player representation on the board and, together with increased independent board representation, led to the addition of our newest board member, Kristen Hilton, an expanded range of specialist advisory committees and a landmark joint Collective Bargaining Agreement.

On behalf of the board, I want to express my thanks to our CEO, Paul Marsh, for his exceptional leadership and diligence over the year. My thanks also to the broader AFLPA team, who continue to fight hard for the interests of our members, and the betterment of the game.

The AFLPA operates within an extremely complex, diverse and demanding environment and we're lucky to have an outstanding mix of playing, work and life experience among our directors that has helped us debate and make good decisions on some challenging issues.

On that front, I want to recognise my board colleagues for their hard work, support and thoughtful contributions during the year. A special call out to Chris Heffernan for his work in chairing the Audit and Risk Committee, and Kristen for chairing the new Human Rights Steering Committee.

I'd like to acknowledge AFLPA President, Patrick Dangerfield, whose commitment to the interests of all our members and the public and behind-the-scenes leadership of the organisation has been prodigious.

A strong playing group leads to a stronger industry and a better game. And a strong playing group needs sturdy leadership from within the AFLPA, so we'll continue to listen, learn and lead for our members.

Andrew Twaits
CHAIR

THE AFLPA BOARD

The AFLPA Board will be finalised at the Annual General Meeting in March. In 2023, the Board was led by President Patrick Dangerfield and Chair Andrew Twaits. The AFLPA Board meets regularly throughout the year to make decisions on behalf of our entire membership.



PATRICK DANGERFIELD
PRESIDENT



PHIL DAVIS
CO-VICE PRESIDENT



ANNALYSE LISTER
CO-VICE PRESIDENT



ANDREW TWAITS
CHAIR



PAUL MARSH
CEO



KRISTEN HILTON



KERRY PETERSON



CHRIS HEFFERNAN



ISABEL HUNTINGTON



TOM JONAS



DARCY MOORE



ED CURNOW



CATHERINE PHILLIPS

OUR MEMBERS

We support all members, including past and present players, through a range of programs and services, including negotiating their collective working conditions, as well as providing individuals with professional development, mental health and wellbeing support and services to ensure players are maximising their time in the game and into transition.



813

AFL PLAYERS

563

AFLW PLAYERS

4,834

ALUMNI MEMBERS

PLAYER DELEGATES

There are at least two delegates from every club, who act as the conduit between the players from their club and the AFLPA Board and staff. The delegates come together annually to discuss key issues impacting players at our leadership conference in January.

The role of a club delegate is to represent the views of their playing group, represent the players and the AFLPA on club decisions, develop and implement an annual Club Action and Priorities Plan in conjunction with their AFLPA Regional Manager and keep players up to date on key information relating to member benefits, industry issues or workplace conditions.



ADELAIDE

Tom Doedee, Eloise Jones, Andrew McPherson, Ebony Marinoff



BRISBANE LIONS

Jade Ellenger, Natalie Grider, Daniel Rich, Brandon Starcevich, Sharni Webb



CARLTON

Matthew Cottrell, Marc Pittonet, Gabriella Pound, Darcy Vescio



COLLINGWOOD

Jordyn Allen, Mason Cox, Erica Fowler, Nathan Murphy, Isaac Quaynor



ESSENDON

Stephanie Cain, Kyle Langford, Zach Merrett, Bonnie Toogood



FREMANTLE

Travis Colyer, Jessica Low, Alex Pearce, Angelique Stannett



GEELONG

Tom Atkins, Amy McDonald, Gryan Miers, Becky Webster



GOLD COAST SUNS

Rory Atkins, Alison Drennan, Bess Keaney, Jake Stein, Claudia Whitfort



GWS GIANTS

Chloe Dalton, Matt Flynn, Katherine Smith



HAWTHORN

Sam Frost, Mitch Lewis, Tilly Lucas-Rodd, Louise Stephenson



MELBOURNE

Sarah Lampard, Tom McDonald, Lily Mithen, Tom Sparrow



NORTH MELBOURNE

Emma King, Nick Larkey, Luke McDonald, Sarah Wright



PORT ADELAIDE

Alex Ballard, Xavier Duursma, Maggie Maclachlan, Connor Rozee



RICHMOND

Sarah D'Arcy, Gabby Seymour, Ivan Soldo, Nick Vlastuin



ST KILDA

Jack Billings, Molly McDonald, Jack Sinclair, Nicola Stevens



SYDNEY SWANS

Hayden McLean, Rebecca Privitelli, James Rowbottom, Lisa Steane



WEST COAST EAGLES

Oscar Allen, Aisling McCarthy, Belinda Smith, Alex Witherden



WESTERN BULLDOGS

Taylor Duryea, Kirsty Lamb, Katie Lynch, Anthony Scott



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

While traditions of player welfare and unity date as far back as 1911, the Association representing the game's elite players officially formed in 1973, celebrating its 50th year of existence in 2023.

From issues relating to match fees and parking on game-day to human rights and player safety, the AFLPA has evolved in its support for players and has continued to build its immense trust as the representative body for all players during a long history.

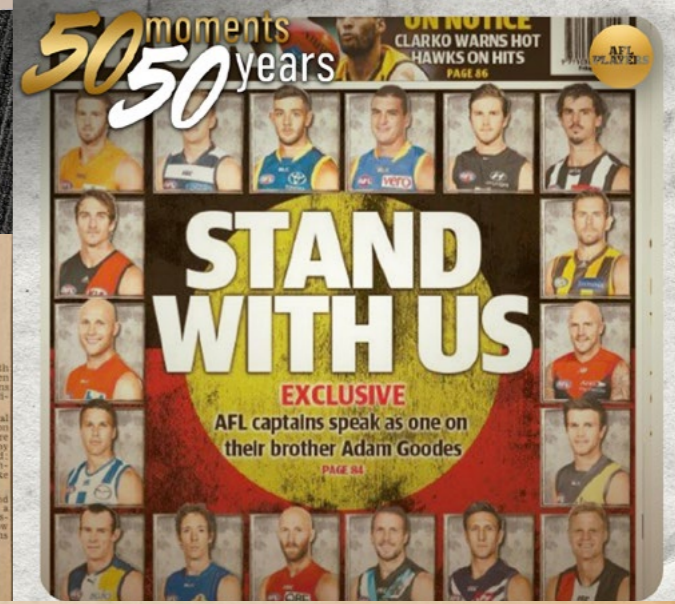
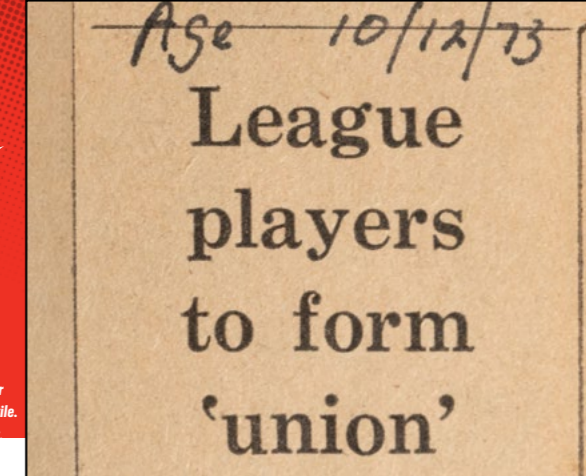
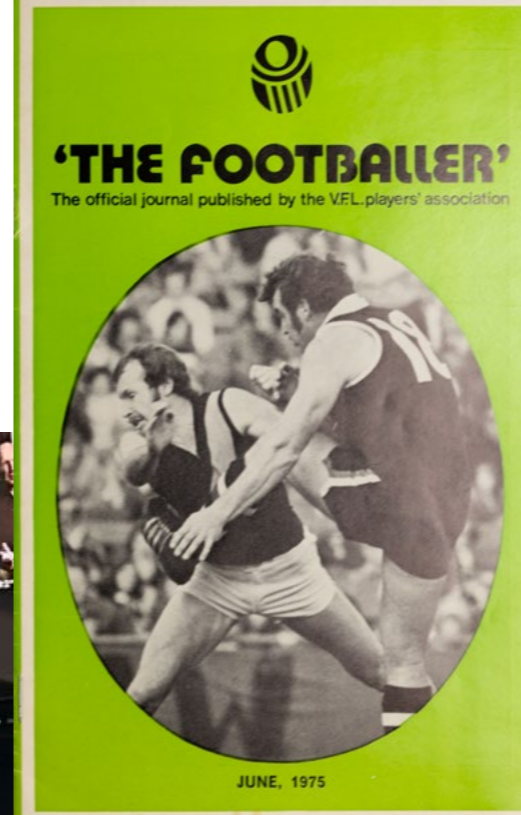
In 2023, the AFLPA celebrated its 50th year by:

- An anniversary event held in South Melbourne in June that included historical artefacts, apparel and literature and featured a panel of current and former AFLPA Board members, leaders and founders.
- Producing an AFLPA documentary with JAMTV that explores our history, formation, and various issues and events in the last 50 years. The documentary includes interviews with:
 - Founding members Geoff Pryor, Gareth Andrews and David McKay
 - Former AFLPA Presidents Don Scott, Michael Moncrieff, Simon and Justin Madden, Luke Ball and Matthew Pavlich
 - Former AFLPA CEOs Brendon Gale, Rob Kerr, and Matt Finnis
 - Former AFL CEOs Andrew Demetriou and Ross Oakley
 - Current and former AFLPA delegates Lauren Arnell and Darcy Vescio
 - Current AFLPA leaders Paul Marsh and Patrick Dangerfield.
- A brand refresh and year-long social media campaigns such as '50 Moments' and 'Every Number Counts', to educate on the important milestones, events, key issues and programs and services the AFLPA has fought for and implemented on behalf of our members.



AFL PLAYERS **FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT**
THE STORY OF THE AFLPA

[Click here to watch the AFLPA documentary 'Fight For The Right'](#)



FROM THE CEO

The AFL industry is in strong shape, and, through the efforts of our players, including guidance from our Board and player leaders, we achieved results in 2023 to be proud of and, in doing so, further enhanced our members' workplaces and the support services available for them.

The historic joint CBA showcased the power of the collective and was a significant moment for the playing group, but we also continued to provide players with programs and services to maximise their time in the game, enhance their professional development, and deal with complex issues to advance their individual and collective rights.

Education and Training Grants remain a vital program that encourages players' career exploration, our Mental Health Navigator Service gives our members a choice of who they go to for wellbeing support and is funded by us, and we continue to support nearly 5,000 Alumni members through injury and hardship support and a variety of other services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players bring so much to this game, the indigenous game of our nation, and we celebrate and educate their unique cultures in various ways, including publishing our annual Indigenous Player Map, as well as representing their interests through our Indigenous Advisory Board.

We took a leadership position supporting the referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament and while the result wasn't as hoped, we're proud that we supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities during a very difficult time.

Issues regarding player health and safety as well as human rights remain a constant in this industry, and we continued to champion the voices of the playing group to push for further changes in these areas. Through the CBA, we negotiated mechanisms that will allow us to enhance our representation of players in these areas.

I wouldn't be alone in thinking 2023 couldn't have ended any better on the field with two incredible seasons – congratulations to the Collingwood and Brisbane AFL and AFLW players on their premiership achievements.



Paul Marsh
CEO

AFLPA STEERING COMMITTEES AND POLICIES

The AFLPA upholds the principle that all players deserve a safe workplace, one that supports their physical, psychological, and cultural wellbeing.

Acknowledging the need for further industry progress in this area, the AFLPA developed a Human Rights Framework for its operations, established a Human Rights Steering Committee and revamped the Indigenous Advisory Board, as well as negotiated a commitment to a joint Equity, Inclusion and Safety Advisory Committee with the industry.

This Human Rights Steering Committee, formed in 2023, brings together experts in health and safety, race, and gender issues, with the committee members including:

- Kristen Hilton (Chair)
- Jason Mifsud
- Nyadol Nyuon
- Natasha de Silva
- Rana Hussain
- Todd Fernando
- Andrew Potter
- Paul Marsh
- Brett Murphy
- Gabby Seymour
- Darcy Vescio
- Aliir Aliir

The expanded Indigenous Advisory Board saw the appointment of its first independent chair in 2023, comprising of the following:

- Jason Mifsud (Chair) – Gunditjmara
- Ngiare Brown – Yuin
- Aleisha Newman – Ningy Ningy
- Ally Anderson – Gangulu
- Chad Wingard – Kurna and Ngarrandjerri
- Gemma Houghton – Yindjbarndi
- Jarman Impey – Yorta Yorta
- Natalie Plane – Kamilaroi
- Zac Williams – Wiradjuri
- Paul Marsh (AFLPA CEO)
- Brett Murphy (AFLPA GM – Player & Stakeholder Relations)
- Anthony Wilson (AFLPA Indigenous Relationships Manager) – Ngarrindjeri and Kurna

These initiatives underscore a commitment, solidified in the CBA, between the AFLPA and AFL




celebrating 50 years



AFL PLAYERS
celebrating 50 years

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

After several months of negotiations, the AFLPA was pleased to announce the finalisation of a landmark joint CBA in September 2023.

Under the deal, which runs from 2023 to 2027, both AFL and AFLW players have come together under the one agreement for the first time. This means all 1300 elite players are under a revenue share model, enshrining them as true partners in the game.

CBA HIGHLIGHTS



2023-2027



EVERYTHING PAID TO PLAYERS & ASSOCIATION



SHARE OF ASSESSABLE REVENUE



ANNUAL BRIDGING OF GENDER PAY GAP



EQUALISATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR AFL & AFLW PLAYERS

FOR AFLW PLAYERS



INCREASE PLAYER PAYMENTS 2022-2027

AVERAGE SALARY



2023



2027



INCREASED AFLW GAMES



AFLW 12-MONTH CONTRACTS



AFLW MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS

FOR AFL PLAYERS



INCREASE PLAYER PAYMENTS 2022-2027

AVERAGE SALARY



2023



2027

PLAYER WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT



FUNDING FOR PAST PLAYER SUPPORT



OVER 5 YEARS TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



INCREASED FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE



SIMPLIFIED AND GREATER LEAVE



IMPROVED PREGNANCY & PARENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY



EQUAL RELOCATION ALLOWANCE



HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

GROWTH OF THE GAME



MID-SEASON TRADE PERIOD



THREE-YEAR CONTRACTS FOR TOP DRAFTEES



GATHER ROUND HERE TO STAY



MARKETING FUND FOR PLAYERS



INSIGHTS & IMPACT REPORT

In June, the AFLPA released the Second Edition of the Insights and Impact Report, to share the collective insights, perspectives, and experiences of AFL and AFLW players, as well as highlight the impact the AFLPA had in providing support to its members.

The report's second edition covered seven key themes with each theme accompanied by insights that reflect the industry's current landscape direct from the players themselves:

- Club environment
- Transition
- Player development
- AFLPA programs and services
- Health and safety
- Human rights
- Accredited player agents

Included within the second edition are testimonials from players, industry stakeholders, and external experts such as Phil Davis, Chloe Dalton, Alison Downie, Tom Harley, and Yolanda Beattie.

Key insights from the second edition of the report included:

- Continued focus required for AFLW to achieve equity across areas including integration, respect, venues and facilities.
- Workplace culture continues to be linked to ladder success.
- Players negotiated time off being eroded by some clubs.
- Increases in unreported concussions.
- Mental health continues to top the list of societal issues for AFL and AFLW players, with social media ranked as the second highest concern.
- Improved workplace culture measures for AFLW players and better support for off-field development and care.



Click here to view the 2023 AFL Players' Association's Insights & Impact Report

Sport AFL AFL 2023

'Culture of silence': Survey shows angst among players

AFL SPORT 47

AFLW surface tension over six grounds

Players balk at reporting concussion, racism

FROM BACK PAGE
 "We're introducing a whistleblower scheme and this is something the industry needs to be looking to improve. There have been a number of cases in the past 12 months in which players have been injured and not reported. The AFL has not changed its stance on reporting concussions and racism. It's something we're looking to improve. We're looking to improve the reporting process. We're looking to improve the reporting process. We're looking to improve the reporting process."

TOP SECRETS

AFL players reveal concern as head knocks, racism under-reported

Sam Landsberger
 Almost one in 10 AFL players said they had a concussion last year, while a broader 'culture of silence' is preventing players from speaking their minds on human rights issues including racism, an AFLPA survey says. The AFL Players' Association's Insight and Impact report has revealed male and female players often feel gagged by their own clubs. "We've heard players talk about this off the back of Adelaide (pre-season camp) and Hawthorn (racing team)" AFLPA boss Phil March said on Monday night. "I think the industry needs to be asking itself the question why players are not comfortable. They have a right to speak out and it's about safety and at times we've questioned whether aspects of our industry are safe. It's a concern and it's something we need to look at."

"THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCE FOR AN ATHLETE GREATLY INFLUENCES HOW THEY REMEMBER THEIR TIME"



"It's a brutal industry.
 The way the football industry handles players exiting the game needs a lot of work. It needs open and honest communication, but I know there are difficulties involved with that.
 That call from the AFLPA made all the difference for me. Understanding the support they provide and how the transition process works is so valuable. It's a period of great uncertainty but they answered all my questions, which instantly made me feel more comfortable."

ALISON DOWNIE

"IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS AND BRIDGE THE GAP"



"I know, as an athlete, you have to be adaptable and can't expect everything to be right all the time, but shouldn't we expect minimum standards in our workplace that are reflective of the highest level of a national competition?"

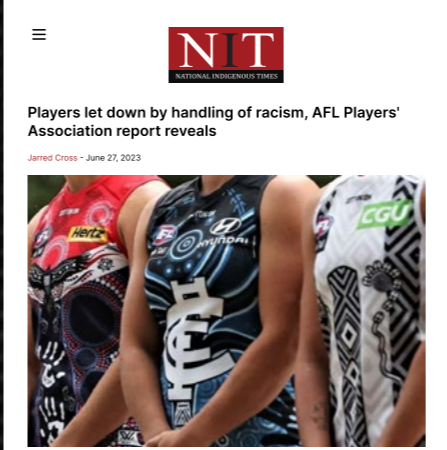
CHLOE DALTON

Sport AFL
AFL Players' Association's Insight and Impact report highlights AFLW players facility concerns

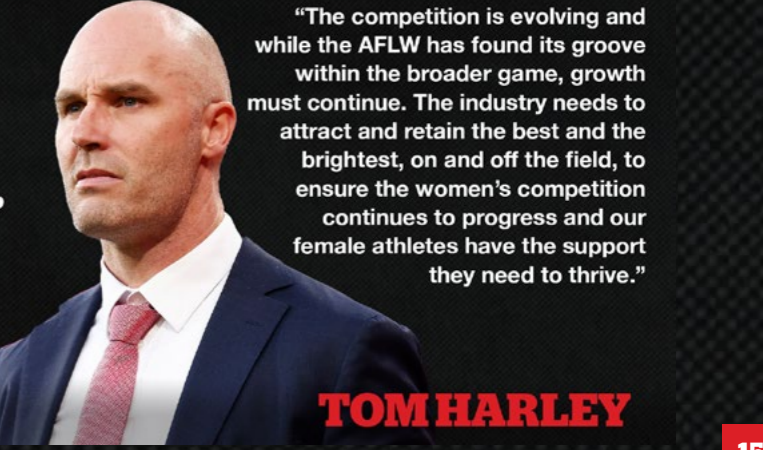
AFL Players' Association report: AFL and AFLW players are staying silent on human rights issues

AFL

AFLPA set to launch whistleblower service after staggering survey results



"GROWTH MUST CONTINUE"



"The competition is evolving and while the AFLW has found its groove within the broader game, growth must continue. The industry needs to attract and retain the best and the brightest, on and off the field, to ensure the women's competition continues to progress and our female athletes have the support they need to thrive."

TOM HARLEY



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

PLAYER SUPPORT

INDIGENOUS PLAYERS ADVISORY BOARD

The AFLPA's Indigenous Advisory Board (IAB) was revamped in 2023, with it now being made up of an independent Chair Jason Mifsud, Dr Ngiare Brown, and seven AFL and AFLW players, including Aliesha Newman, Ally Anderson, Chad Wingard, Gemma Houghton, Jarman Impey, Natalie Plane and Zac Williams.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Launched in 2014, the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a document that symbolises the commitment of our organisation to the development and support of our members to assist them in shaping an inclusive industry, connecting with communities and promoting change within broader society.

In 2022, the AFLPA launched its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. This RAP builds upon the work we've done previously to better ourselves, and by extension the industry, in supporting Indigenous players. The next step in our reconciliation journey will be one that better aligns the relationships the industry has with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players, respect for Indigenous cultures among all stakeholders, and explores opportunities for First Peoples in the game.

Through this RAP, the AFLPA will continue to ingrain these aspects into our organisation with the goal of providing a better workplace for Indigenous members and staff, celebrating their culture and, ultimately, improving their football experience.

INDIGENOUS MAP

First created in 2005, the Indigenous Map is a concept that lists the heritage of each of the game's current Indigenous players. The 2023 map includes the league's 103 AFL and AFLW players who are represented across 63 cultural and language groups.



 [Click here](#) to download a copy of the 2023 AFL Players' Association Indigenous Map

AFL PLAYERS' INDIGENOUS MAP 2023



NB: Player images may appear multiple times as players have provided information for multiple language and/or cultural groups.

DISCLAIMER: This map indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people, which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. For more detailed information about the groups of people in a particular region contact the relevant land council. Not suitable for use in native title and other land claims.

Names and regions as used in the Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia (D. Horton, General Editor) published in 1994 by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (Aboriginal Studies Press) GPO Box 553 Canberra, Act 2601.

*AFLW players listed as of season 2023.





PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The AFLPA continued to deliver world class player development programs in 2023, through the Football Induction Program for first-year players, individual support for finance, professional development services, and education and training grants for current and past players. Additionally, key insights from players have been captured and shared with the industry to drive program development.

INDUCTION PROGRAM

Delivered to all AFL clubs:

- 112 players participated
- Average Impact Rating: 4.57/5

Delivered to 14 AFLW clubs:

- 66 players participated
- Average Impact Rating: 4.31/5

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 498 members submitted 595 applications for Education and Training Grants in 2023.
- The forecast financial support that will be granted is approximately \$1.3m.



WELLBEING SUPPORT IN 2023

6,331

WELLBEING CONSULTATIONS DELIVERED TO CURRENT AND PAST PLAYERS (AND THEIR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS)

35%

INCREASE IN MEMBER CONSULTATIONS FOR 2023

9.6

AVERAGE CONSULTATIONS PER MEMBER

201

MEMBERS ACCESSED THE SERVICE FOR THE FIRST TIME

288

PROVIDERS USED

ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP

Recognising the contribution all former players have made to the game.

The Alumni program offers care for more than 4,830 past player members through injury and hardship support, confidential health and wellbeing services, concussion support, social events, continued education, financial prosperity and career transition.

In 2023:

- Geoff Pryor Hardship Fund: 21 past players received funding support to assist their individual circumstances.

Alumni members experiencing financial hardship due to injury, illness or wellbeing issues can apply for financial assistance through the Geoff Pryor Hardship Fund.

- Lifetime Health Care Program: A total of \$719,000 was reimbursed to 178 players for out-of-pocket expenses for joint-related surgeries (as well as dental procedures where damage was a direct VFL/AFL or AFLW related injury).

The program provides reimbursements to AFLPA members for medical costs and expenses for a joint injury or dental injury incurred while training or playing with a V/AFL or AFLW club.

- Hospital Excess Reimbursements: 172 Alumni were reimbursed a total of over \$84,000 for any procedure that incurred an excess payment.

AFLPA Alumni members can apply for reimbursement of any excess paid for a hospital stay or procedure conducted in a hospital up to \$500.

Pleasingly, all 18 clubs were represented in receiving assistance in 2023, in addition to past players from Fitzroy, Footscray and South Melbourne.



CAREER TRANSITION

The transition out of the AFL system is a focus area for the AFLPA after the players identified it as one of two key issues, alongside mental health, affecting the current and past playing groups.

All retired or delisted players have access to a multifaceted career transition support process via the AFLPA. Case managed by our team of Regional Managers, players are assessed against an empirical framework designed to provide insights on their transition status.

All AFL and AFLW players have access to the following:

- One-on-one transition support meetings during their career and while transitioning out of the game. They're then followed up in the first 12 months of being out of the system.
- Independent one-on-one Career Coaching, Financial Health Checks and wellbeing support throughout their career and up to three years post transition from the game.
- Education and training grants during their careers, and for up to five years after they've left the system.
- Scholarships through Torrens University Australia, which includes flexibility and direct contact with education officers.

- AFL Players have a Player Retirement Account which has over \$205 million invested on behalf of members. Members begin receiving payments from this fund in the financial year following their exit from the system for up to 10 years (dependent upon tenure), to support their financial transition to their next career.

Additionally, players can also access legal support, brand development and are introduced to our Alumni program, as well as a series of online Development and Growth webinars, run by industry experts and featured a host of vital topics, to upskill participants and enhance their capabilities for when they enter a working environment away from football.

The AFLPA continues to work with our members during the transition process, and we collaborate with clubs to offer a number of programs and services that assists players' career exploration, so they engage, upskill, network, build their brands and maximise their time during their careers to ease some of the inherent stresses that come with career transition.

211

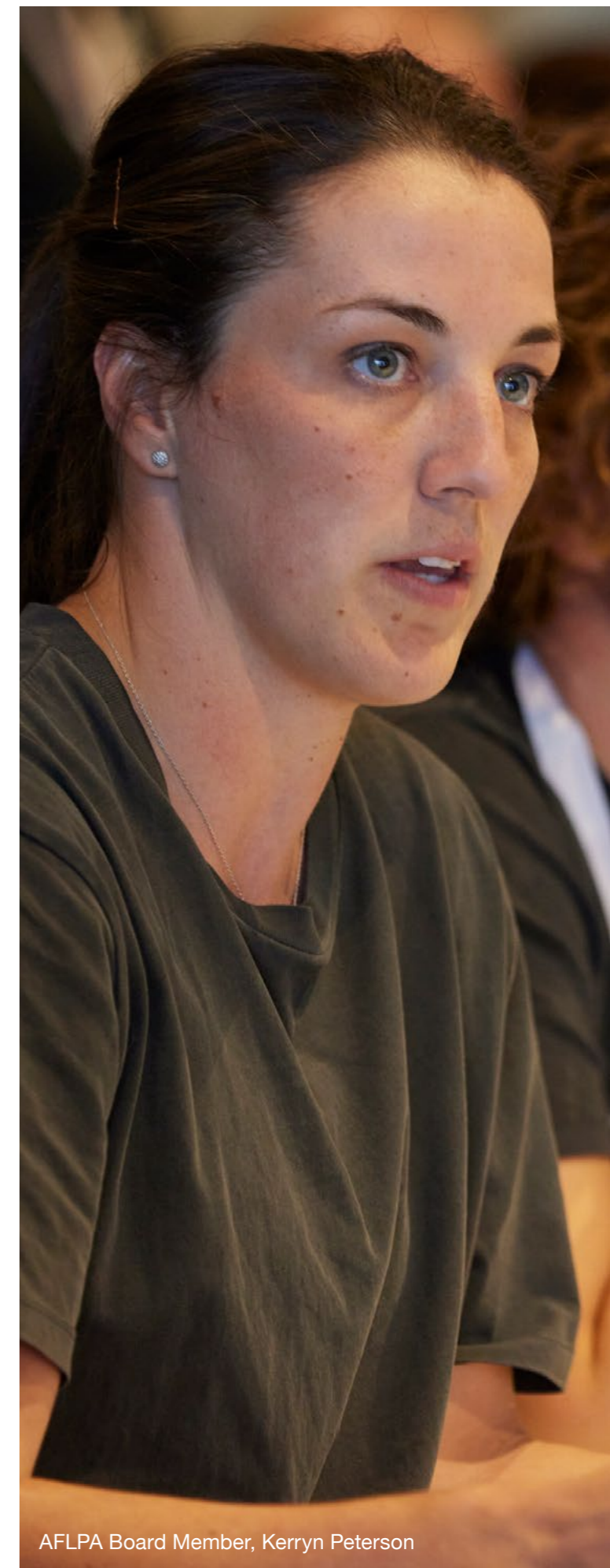
AFL AND AFLW PLAYERS TRANSITIONED OUT OF THE GAME IN 2023

ACCREDITED AGENTS

The AFLPA is the sole body responsible for the accreditation, regulation and professional development of player agents across the industry.

Our GM of Legal chairs the AFLPA's Agent Accreditation Board, which consists of representatives from all parts of the industry including the AFL, the pathways, the playing group and the agents themselves.

- 106 Accredited Player Agents
- Three-day online New Agent Course - 31 participants
- 16 New Accredited Player Agents
- Professional Development:
 - In-person national Agents Conference featuring 11 guest presenters
 - Five in-person State Forums held
 - Four online education sessions held
- Managed Agent Evaluation Framework
- Conducted Annual Agent Audit
- Completed first annual Agent Player Transition Reporting
- Talent Pathway Education - 12 agent information sessions for players and parents held online and in person



AFLPA Board Member, Kerryn Peterson

TACKLE YOUR FEELINGS

Tackle Your Feelings is a free mental health training program for players, community AFL coaches, committee members and club support staff and is a partnership between the AFLPA, AFL Coaches Association and Zurich Insurance.

The workshops, which are delivered by local psychologists and high profile players and coach ambassadors, aim to help participants gain the tools to understand, recognise and respond to signs of mental ill-health in their players and is based on the education delivered to the AFL industry.

In 2023, the program was delivered to more than 3,490 participants in every Australian state and territory, from 180 clubs via 156 workshops. This spread across the country was enabled by 20 partnerships with state bodies, community leagues and regional assemblies (rural Victoria).

The AFLPA was again a strong contributor to the program through psychologist resources, content production, ambassador activation and legal support.

Tackle Your Feelings ambassadors Touk Miller, Steven May, Andy Brayshaw, Tom Stewart, Ellie Blackburn, Brit Bonnici, Kaitlyn Ashmore, along with past players Dylan Buckley and Dan Gorringer, contributed to the program through content creation, appearances and participation in workshops around the country.

A Tackle Your Feelings feature story headlined by ambassador Dan Gorringer was a 2023 highlight. This particular piece of content has been viewed more than 688,896 times across the Tackle Your Feelings social platforms.

This feature along with our other content helped grow the program's social media following by more than 34 per cent across Instagram, Facebook and X.

AFLPA PARTNERSHIPS

The AFLPA forms partnerships with a number of businesses who provide benefits to players and the AFLPA through commercial opportunities, contributing to vital member programs and services, and industry events.

In 2023, we worked with the following partners:



MEMORABILIA & LICENSING

The AFLPA continues to work closely with the AFL to license player imagery for a range of consumer products. As in previous years, the dominant player products were footy cards and memorabilia.

In 2023:

- Total licensing royalties received by the AFLPA for the financial year was \$2,510,979.95.
- This was \$510,979.95 more than the minimum guarantee (MG) of \$2,000,000.
- Memorabilia, an area of licensing, continues to produce great outcomes for players.
- Top three products for the year:
 1. Select footy cards: Accounting for \$1,029,840 in royalties.
 2. Team Zone footy cards: Accounting for more than \$775,126 in royalties.
 3. SE Products (the official memorabilia partner) produced more than \$236,085

Brisbane Lions
2023 NAB AFLW PREMIERS



STANDING (FROM LEFT): PHOEBE MONAHAN SHANNON CAMPBELL ELLIE HAMPSON ORLA O'DWYER JENNIFER DUNNE
CHARLOTTE MULLINS POPPY BOLTZ TAYLOR SMITH TAHLIA HICKIE DAKOTA DAVIDSON CRAIG STARCEVICH (COACH)

BOTTOM ROW (FROM LEFT): COURTNEY HODDER RUBY SVARC ISABEL DAWES LILY POSTLETHWAITE SOPHIE CONWAY
ALLY ANDERSON JADE ELLENGER MIKAYLA PAUGA CATHY SVARC NATALIE BRIDER BREANNA KOENEN (CAPTAIN)





SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

In 2023, the AFLPA continued to advocate for social change, using its voice for causes our members are passionate about.

AFL PLAYERS CARE

- AFL Players Care is the official charity initiative of AFL and AFLW players.
- In 2023, \$334,800 was donated across 16 charities.
- These charities included BCNA, Cancer Council, Challenge, Fight MND, Footy for Climate, Happiness Co, HeartKids, Kids Plus, the Mark Hughes Foundation, McGovern Foundation, My Room, Peter Mac, Purple Hands, Reclink, Redkite and RizeUp.

THE VOICE REFERENDUM

In 2023, the AFLPA announced our support for a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be recognised in the Australian Constitution.

This decision was made after consulting with players, was the recommendation of the AFLPA's Indigenous Advisory Board, and was endorsed by the Board.

It is a core belief of the AFLPA that all people have a right to have a say in matters that impact them. We believed the Voice referendum presented an opportunity for the AFLPA to use its influence to demonstrate leadership on an issue that is so critical to so many Australians.

The AFLPA actively encouraged its members and the wider public to educate themselves, and make their own decisions on the referendum.

SUSTAINABILITY

In 2023, the AFLPA:

- Continued our ongoing support of Footy for Climate and acknowledged their goals to protect the future of football for fans, the industry and broader community.
- Was invited to attend the Sports Climate Reception hosted by the British High Commission in Canberra.
- Contributed to carbon offsetting projects and actively participated in online UN Climate Action webinars.
- Strengthened our ties within the industry, through engagement with the AFL Head of Sustainability.
- Participated in an Industry Round Table hosted by the Richmond Football Club.
- Conducted a review of investment policy statements and made amendments, in an effort to incorporate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles into our investment strategies.
- Proudly welcomed Waste Ninja as our waste management services provider, who not only measure and report on our waste, but also reuse our waste to generate renewable energy and organic fertilisers.
- Conducted our second annual carbon audit to ensure transparency and accountability, with the findings submitted to the UNFCCC.





LADDER

We level the playing field for young people to thrive in partnership with the AFL industry and players.

Ladder exists because of the vision and action of three AFL players who saw a need of, and role for, the AFL industry in achieving social change. Ladder was established in 2007 and has since worked closely with the AFL industry. We are the official charity of all AFL players, the AFLPA and a charity partner of the AFL.

Ladder helps young people in need across Australia through tailored, holistic development and mentoring programs focused on the individual. We level the playing field by building critical skills, self belief and meaningful opportunities for young people to thrive and create the future they deserve.

LADDER PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- ▶ 100% had an increase in self-efficacy and a sense of belonging
- ▶ 100% had an improvement in their wellbeing and quality of life.
- ▶ 100% felt more independent
- ▶ 100% improved their physical health
- ▶ 83% are now engaged in education, employment or training.

PLAYERS INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE TO ASPIRE

Some of the biggest challenges working with young people who have experienced major setbacks early in life are their lack of dreams and plans for the future.

AFL and AFLW players bring unique perspectives and experiences that really resonate with young people in our programs. We continually receive support from players, who volunteer their time, energy and skills as program ambassadors and mentors. These elite athletes share their life stories and insights with our program participants with the aim of inspiring each young person to develop their own aspirations in life.

In return, Ladder provides players with valuable professional and personal development opportunities, including serving as volunteer mentors and guest speakers for program participants and alumni – engaging and enabling AFL and AFLW players to actively contribute to lasting social change.

“We can’t wait to support more amazing young people through the Ladder program, and to continue to mentor them and provide life advice – and even have them give us life advice! The Ladder program’s something pretty special.”
- Alicia Eva, Ladder Board Member and GWS GIANTS AFLW player

LADDER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ladder’s Board of Directors comprises AFL industry leaders and respected sector experts:

- ▶ Paul Marsh (Chair)
- ▶ John Ulkowski, AFLPA General Manager – Business Operations
- ▶ Jo Gilbert, AFL Head of Commercial Partnerships and Experience
- ▶ Marija Simich, AFL Head of Strategy
- ▶ James Avery, GWS Giants Chief Operating Officer
- ▶ Alicia Eva, GWS Giants AFLW player
- ▶ Caitriona Fay, Perpetual Managing Partner – Community, Social and ESG Investment
- ▶ Ben Ross, Shadforth Financial Group Company Secretary



THANKS FROM THE LADDER PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to the AFL and all it's players for supporting the wonderful charity that is the Ladder program. Your contribution helps change the lives of a lot of young people in a really positive way, and we're all really grateful for that!
♡ from Simone



CONTENT

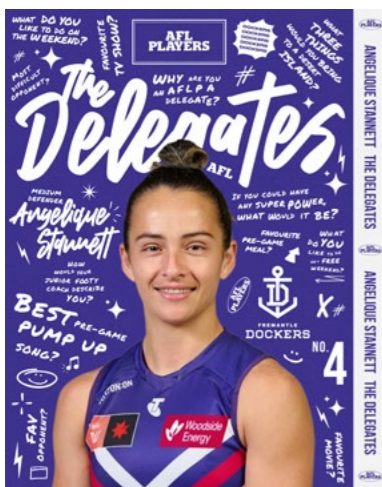
In 2023, the AFLPA produced content across both the AFL and AFLW competitions, celebrating our members not only on-field but off-field as well.

We acknowledged the achievements of both cohorts through player milestones, recognised the growing diversity among our playing groups and highlighted our members' interests outside of the game.

We continued to amplify the key functions of the AFLPA, drive player engagement, underline the role we play within the industry, highlight player advocacy and increase commercial outcomes for our partners.

CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Showcasing the Collective Bargaining Agreement outcomes on our social media channels.
- Successful 22Under22 and MVP campaigns across both AFL and AFLW competitions.
- A well-received and highly engaged Delegate Spotlight content series.
- 50th Anniversary content that continued throughout the year to tell the story of the AFLPA.
- Various content series that helped showcase our commercial partners.



2023

22UNDER22



The 2023 22Under22 campaigns for both AFL and AFLW came with great success as we saw a record amount of buy in from not only fans, but clubs and players as well.

Being able to produce content from both Michael Barlow (Chair of Selectors – AFL season) and Melissa Hickey (Chair of Selectors – AFLW season) created another engagement piece for fans as well.

By The Numbers

- AFLW 22Under22 entries increased by 73%
- AFL 22Under22 entries increased by 23%
- Over 21,000 entries for AFL 22Under22
- Average activity duration of 6:48 minutes (AFL) and 6:13 minutes (AFLW)
- 14,867 new fans (AFL) and 2,199 (AFLW) via Tradable Bits

CLASS OF 2023 AFL #22UNDER22

B:	Nasiah Wanganeen-Milera	Sam De Koning	Miles Bergman
HB:	Nick Daicos (C)	Hayden Young	Harry Sheezel
C:	Errol Gulden	Caleb Serong	Will Ashcroft
HF:	Mitch Owens	Jamarra Ugle-Hagan	Cody Weightman
FF:	Kysaiah Pickett	Jye Amiss	Josh Rachele
Foll:	Luke Jackson	Tom Green	Jai Newcombe (VC)
I/C:	Bailey Smith	Chad Warner	Will Day
	Noah Anderson		

CLASS OF 2023 AFLW #22UNDER22

B:	Daisy D'Arcy	Tahlia Gillard	
HB:	Gabrielle Newton	Lucy McEvoy	Tarni Evans
C:	Georgie Prespakis (VC)	Charlie Rowbottom (C)	Nina Morrison
HF:	Ella Roberts	Mia Austin	Teah Charlton
FF:	Zarlle Goldsworthy	Alyssa Bannan	
Foll:	Ally Morphett	Laura Gardiner	Isabel Dawes
I/C:	Ella Heads	Eliza McNamara	Madison Newman
	Matilda Scholz	Sophie Van De Heuvel	Alice O'Loughlin



AFL PLAYERS' MVP AWARDS

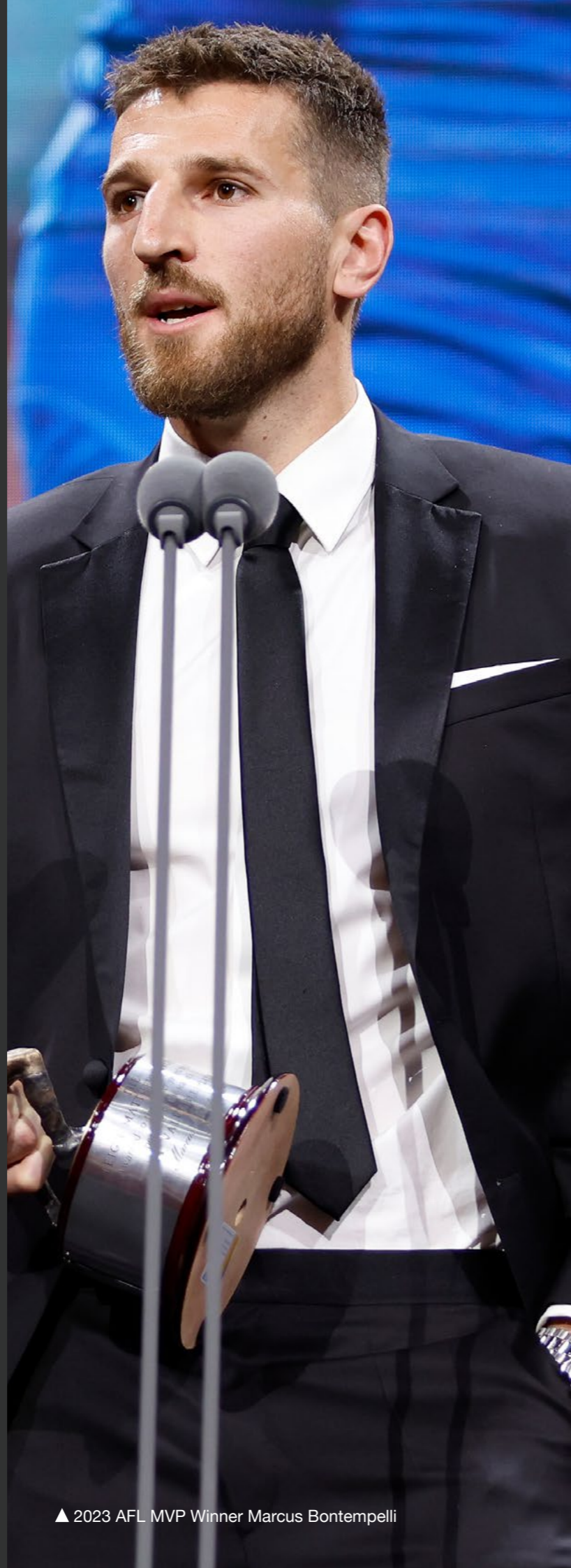
The AFL Players' MVP Awards is the players' premier awards celebration and sees the Most Valuable Player, as chosen by their peers, recognised with the Leigh Matthews Trophy.

Awarded in collaboration with an industry-wide event that incorporated the AFL and AFL Coaches Association awards, the event was attended by key industry stakeholders, including players, and resulted in significant broadcast and media opportunities.

The AFL Players' MVP Awards section was hosted by AFLPA President, Patrick Dangerfield, where he presented the players' choice for the following awards:

- AFL Players' MVP Award, presented by Snaffle, and won by Western Bulldogs superstar, Marcus Bontempelli.
- Most Courageous Award, presented by Tackle Your Feelings, and won by Port Adelaide hard nut, Zak Butters.
- Best Captain Award, presented by The Diamond Guys, and also won by Western Bulldogs skipper, Marcus Bontempelli.
- Best First-Year Player Award, presented by Local Expert, and won by North Melbourne young gun, Harry Sheezel.
- Education and Training Excellence Award, presented by Torrens University Australia, and won by Darcy Fort and Robbie Fox.
- Grant Hattam Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism, presented by Thomson Geer Lawyers, and won by AFL Media's Sarah Black.

The awards continue to provide an opportunity for players, partners and key stakeholders in the AFL industry to come together and honour and celebrate the players on the biggest stage.



▲ 2023 AFL MVP Winner Marcus Bontempelli



AFLW MVP

In 2023, the AFLPA, its members and partners came together to celebrate the best of Season 8, in one of the biggest nights on the AFLW football calendar.

At an exclusive in-person event at Luminare in South Melbourne, players were awarded the AFLW Players' Most Valuable Player, along with Most Courageous, Best Captain and Best First Year.

SEASON 8 AWARD WINNERS

- North Melbourne superstar Jasmine Garner claimed her second AFLW Players' MVP Award, presented by Local Expert. Voted by her peers as the competition's finest, Jasmine joined Adelaide and Port Adelaide legend Erin Phillips as the AFLW's only multiple MVP recipients.
- Brisbane's Courtney Hodder took out the Most Courageous Award, presented by Tackle Your Feelings.
- Melbourne skipper Kate Hore was crowned the cohort's Best Captain, presented by the Diamond Guys.
- Geelong's Aishling Moloney was awarded Best First Year Player, presented by KPMG, becoming the first Irish recruit to win the best rookie title from both AFLW and AFL competitions.
- Fremantle player Madeleine Scanlon was also awarded the Education and Training Excellence Award, presented by Torrens University Australia, for her commitment to her studies away from the football field.

The special night was an opportunity for our members and commercial partners to mingle and honour another year of growth for the AFLW competition.



▲ 2023 AFLW MVP Winner Jasmine Garner

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Business Operations manages the day-to-day financial and administrative operations of the organisation, ensuring the financial security and sustainability of the AFLPA. The department also manages the Player Retirement Account, oversees the AFL Players' Association's Superannuation Fund and administers and manages the financial operations of the AFL Players Care program and AFL Players Injury & Hardship Fund.

In 2023:

- At financial year-end, the AFL Players' Association had a net asset position of \$10.3 million.
- At financial year-end the players' retirement account investments totalled \$191.5 million.
- As per the rules of the Player Retirement Account (PRA), the fund:
 - Paid \$8.4 million as initial lump payment to 2022 retirees with a further \$11.4 million being re-invested for future periodic payments
 - Paid \$8.2 million as periodic payments to 2012-2021 retirees.
 - Received \$54.8 million per the CBA revenue share for 2017-2022 with \$5.49 million paid to players with an inactive PRA.
- The AFL Players' Association 2023 total revenue amounted to \$32.8 million.
- A total of \$3.7 million was spent on player development and wellbeing programs.
- A total of \$3.3 million was spent via the AFL Players Injury & Hardship Fund programs, with \$13.6 million retained for future use.
- A total of \$335,000 was donated by AFL and AFLW players to various Australian charities through the AFL Players Care program.



Kate Surman

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AFL PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Income		
Revenue - AFLPA Operating	12,490,123	11,554,796
Revenue - Player Retirement Account	15,000,000	71,472,174
Other Income	2,118,361	2,233,075
Profit / (Loss) on financial instruments - Player Retirement Account	3,193,288	(7,385,975)
	32,801,772	77,874,070
Expenditure		
Business Operations	(2,726,251)	(2,964,879)
Player Retirement Account	(18,193,288)	(64,086,199)
Human Resources	(463,641)	-
Legal	(703,505)	(731,149)
Strategy & Transformation	(627,854)	-
Commercial & Communications	(4,443,752)	(4,032,669)
Player & Stakeholder Relations	(1,517,515)	(1,436,449)
Member Programs & Services	(3,925,308)	(3,689,743)
	(32,601,114)	(76,950,079)
	200,658	923,991
Profit Before Income Tax		
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit After Income Tax	200,658	923,991
Net movement in reserves account	46,630	(915,023)
Total Comprehensive Income Attributable To Members Of The Association	247,288	8,968

AFL PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Current Asset		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,869,726	6,847,174
Trade and other receivables	436,064	61,515,306
Financial assets	76,455,096	68,257,470
Contract assets	980,325	-
Other assets	341,495	298,749
Total Current Asset	85,082,706	136,918,699
Non-Current Assets		
Financial assets	124,584,892	91,938,290
Plant and equipment	526,656	245,033
Total Non-Current Assets	125,111,548	92,183,323
Total Assets	210,194,254	229,102,022
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	69,955,502	66,994,537
Contract liabilities	219,096	248,787
Lease liabilities	13,218	191,712
Provisions	3,281,090	2,987,400
Total Current Liabilities	73,468,906	70,422,436
Non-Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	126,296,816	148,452,914
Lease liabilities	17,355	15,453
Provisions	83,763	131,093
Total Non-Current Liabilities	126,397,934	148,599,460
Total Liabilities	199,866,840	219,021,896
Net Assets	10,327,414	10,080,126
Equity		
Retained earnings	9,831,706	9,631,048
Reserves	495,708	449,078
Total Equity	10,327,414	10,080,126

AFL PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Cash Flow From Operating Activities		
Receipts from Members & Accredited Agents	1,271,532	1,285,667
Receipt from Operating Grants	91,464,330	26,702,500
Player Licencing & Marketing income received	2,753,457	1,768,105
Sponsorship receipts	799,238	686,455
Interest received	388,884	172,695
Sundry receipts	1,929,153	2,204,922
Payments to suppliers and employees	(60,210,670)	(26,018,497)
Net Cash Provided By Operating Activities	38,395,924	6,801,847
Cash Flows From Investing Activities		
Fixed asset purchases	(513,466)	(38,530)
Investments into managed funds	(32,019,976)	(4,408,480)
Net Cash Used In Investing Activities	(32,523,442)	(4,447,010)
Cash Flows From Financing Activities		
Lease payments	(208,966)	(207,993)
Net Cash Used In Financing Activities	(208,966)	(207,993)
Net Increase In Cash and Cash Equivalents Held	5,653,516	2,146,844
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	13,569,608	11,422,764
Cash and Cash Equivalents at End of Financial Year	19,223,124	13,569,608

AFLPA CHARITY FUND 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Income		
Player contributions	532,950	476,800
Sundry contributions	5,648	3,174
Code of conduct fines	2,500	-
Investment income	36,707	31,616
	577,805	511,590
Expenditure		
Professional service fees	(5,404)	(4,866)
Finance Changes	(10,401)	(11,560)
Management Fees	(86,909)	(82,770)
Donations	(334,800)	(527,800)
	(437,514)	(626,996)
Profit / Loss Before Income Tax	140,291	(115,406)
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit / Loss After Income Tax	140,291	(115,406)
Net movement in reserve account	12,520	(128,796)
Total Comprehensive Profit/ (Loss) For The Year	152,811	(244,202)
Total Comprehensive Profit/ (Loss) Attributable To Members Of The Fund	152,811	(244,202)

AFLPA CHARITY FUND 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	255,242	207,047
Trade and other receivables	31,037	3,174
Financial assets	1,395,964	1,363,434
Total Current Assets	1,682,243	1,573,655
Total Assets	1,682,243	1,573,655
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	3,950	48,173
Total Current Liabilities	3,950	48,173
Total Liabilities	3,950	48,173
Net Assets	1,678,293	1,525,482
Equity		
Settled capital	100	100
Retained earnings	1,571,117	1,430,826
Reserves	107,076	94,556
Total Equity	1,678,293	1,525,482

AFLPA CHARITY FUND 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Cash Flows from Operating Activities:		
Player charity contributions	510,736	480,814
Code of conduct fines	2,500	-
Interest received	6,296	1,023
Payments to suppliers	(471,336)	(626,297)
Net Cash (Used In) / Provided By Operating Activities	48,196	(144,460)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities:		
Net (Purchase) / Proceeds from equity investments	(50,283)	(5,932)
Income from equity investments	30,411	30,593
Investment related expenses	(10,401)	(11,559)
Net Cash Provided By Investing Activities	(30,273)	13,102
Net Increase / (Decrease) In Cash Held	17,923	(131,358)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	281,739	413,097
Cash And Cash Equivalents At End Of Financial Year	299,662	281,739

AFL PLAYERS INJURY AND HARDSHIP FUND 2021-2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2022)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2022		
Income		
Corpus contributions	2,842,718	3,150,640
Investment income	209,782	122,249
Other income	209,875	-
	3,262,375	3,272,889
Expenditure		
Injury & Hardship program payments	(2,586,365)	(2,643,669)
Professional fees	(514,378)	(557,095)
Injury & Hardship payments provision	(161,632)	(72,125)
	(3,262,375)	(3,272,889)
Profit Before Income Tax	-	-
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit After Income Tax	-	-



AFL PLAYERS INJURY AND HARDSHIP FUND 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	7,647,407	2,254,238
Financial assets	6,539,054	6,321,850
Trade and other receivables	5,168	4,933
Total Current Assets	14,191,629	8,581,021
Total Assets	14,191,629	8,581,021
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	20,310	52,663
Provisions	553,738	392,105
Total Current Liabilities	574,048	444,768
Total Liabilities	574,048	444,768
Net Assets	13,617,581	8,136,253
Equity		
Reserves	13,617,581	8,136,253
Total Equity	13,617,581	8,136,253

AFL PLAYERS INJURY AND HARDSHIP FUND 2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023		
Cash Flows From Operating Activities:		
Corpus contributions received	8,215,000	4,250,000
Interest received	53,476	5,493
Payments to suppliers	(2,875,072)	(3,150,435)
Net Cash Provided By Operating Activities	5,393,404	1,105,058
Cash Flows From Investing Activities:		
Proceeds / (Purchases) in equity investments	(519,038)	(165,770)
Income from equity investments	156,306	116,756
Investment related expenses	(48,149)	(50,328)
Net Cash Used In Investing Activities	(410,881)	(99,343)
Net Increase In Cash Held	4,982,523	1,005,715
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	3,207,890	2,202,175
Cash And Cash Equivalents At End Of Financial Year	8,190,413	3,207,890

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