



STRATEGIC PLAN

Gemba

APRIL 2025



**AMERICAN
FOOTBALL
AUSTRALIA**

Strategy House

Developed based on the inputs at the strategic planning workshop in collaboration with the AFA board, affiliate members and key stakeholders. Facilitated by Gemba.

Purpose:

**Provide Australians with the opportunity
to discover, participate in and love American Football**

Vision:

Provide Australians with unrivalled experiences through American Football

Strategic
Pillars:

PARTICIPATION

EXPERIENCE

PATHWAYS

ELITE PERFORMANCE

Objectives:

Increase the number of Australians playing American Football through inclusive, high-quality participation experiences

Deliver a high-quality experience at all levels of American Football to retain participants and increase satisfaction

Develop clear pathways for players, coaches, and officials from grassroots to elite, ensuring long-term engagement and talent progression

Build a high-performance system to identify, develop and retain elite talent, increase competitive opportunities, and prepare athletes for international success

Strategic
Priorities:

American Football Australia will..

1. Establish Flag Football as a core sport in schools
2. Strengthen clubs to grow community participation
3. Make American Football accessible to all Australians
4. Raise awareness of American Football to inspire participation

American Football Australia will..

1. Strengthen SSOs to improve participant experience and retention
2. Improve access to quality facilities in the right locations
3. Enhance coaching and officiating standards to improve retention
4. Strengthen participant connection and engagement

American Football Australia will..

1. Ensure seamless transitions between participation experiences
2. Strengthen pathways from grassroots to elite
3. Support non-playing transitions to retain expertise
4. Improve club governance and development resources

American Football Australia will..

1. Identify and develop talent for LA28 and Brisbane 32 Olympics
2. Develop world-class elite coaching
3. Increase competitive game time for elite athletes
4. Build sustainable high-performance infrastructure

Enablers:

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

PEOPLE & CAPABILITY

TECHNOLOGY, DATA & ANALYTICS

Note: 'Participant' refers to an individual who is engaged in some way in a sporting activity or event, either competing, coaching, officiating, volunteering or supporting (As per The Australian Sports Commissions 'Play Well' Strategy)
Source: AFA Strategy Workshop (March 2025); Gemba Analysis (2025)

Pillar 1: **Participation** – Objectives & Initiatives

1. PARTICIPATION

Objective: Increase the number of Australians playing American Football through inclusive, high-quality participation experiences

1.1 Establish Flag Football as a core sport in schools

Initiatives:

- Build our Sporting Schools Programs to be the top 'ball sport' engaged.
- Integrate Flag Football into High Schools as a core sport
- Develop structured inter-school competitions e.g. gala days to create more playing opportunities at the primary and secondary level
- Connect schools running Flag programs with local clubs to create clear pathways for students to transition into community football

KPI: Number of students actively participating in Flag or Tackle programs

1.2 Strengthen clubs to grow community participation

Initiatives:

- Provide clubs with training, operational resources, financial and marketing support to help them expand
- Develop a guideline outlining the minimum requirements for new clubs
- Develop an Annual Facility Needs Assessment Program to track which clubs/regions need more investment
- Increase SSO staffing capacity to support local delivery

KPI: Increase memberships, and growth of new clubs and leagues across all states

1.3 Make American Football accessible to all Australians

Initiatives:

- Expand women's and girls' football through dedicated competitions, recruitment campaigns, and female ambassador programs
- Develop culturally inclusive initiatives to engage Indigenous Australians and multicultural communities in the sport
- Create adaptive and modified formats for people with disabilities to ensure full accessibility
- Establish partnerships to provide affordable access to equipment

KPI: Balance of youth/senior and male/female participation

1.4 Raise awareness of American Football to inspire participation

Initiatives:

- Launch both national and localised state-based marketing campaigns to increase community awareness and participation
- Strengthen partnerships with global organisations like NFL Flag to leverage credibility and exposure
- Use high profile ambassadors and role models to promote the sport and attract new participants

KPI: Engagement levels in national marketing campaigns

Pillar 2: **Experience** – Objectives & Initiatives

2. EXPERIENCE

Objective: Deliver a high-quality experience at all levels of American Football to retain participants and increase satisfaction

2.1 Strengthen SSOs to improve participant experience and retention

Initiatives:

- Provide SSOs with governance training, operational support, and best practice frameworks to enhance service delivery
- Establish national benchmarks to ensure consistency in club support, competition quality, and participant experience
- Develop an SSO evaluation system to measure effectiveness in participant retention and overall experience

KPI: Improved service delivery and satisfaction scores from SSO-aligned clubs

2.2 Improve access to quality facilities in the right locations

Initiatives:

- Work with councils, schools, and other sports (e.g., Rugby, Soccer, AFL) to secure shared field access and playing spaces
- Develop a national facility strategy to identify priority areas for new or upgraded infrastructure
- Provide clubs and SSOs with advocacy tools to improve facility access and secure long-term agreements

KPI: Number of strategic partnerships to improve facility access

2.3 Enhance coaching and officiating standards to improve retention

Initiatives:

- Develop national training and accreditation system ensuring consistent base level coaching and officiating
- Establish mentoring and professional development programs for officials and coaches at all levels ('Coach the Coaches' 'Coach the Officials')
- Implement a feedback system to track coach and referee effectiveness and its impact on retention

KPI: Number of accredited coaches and referees at different levels of the game

2.4 Strengthen participant connection and engagement

Initiatives:

- Create club led social events, recognition programs, and community-building initiatives
- Develop digital engagement tools to keep participants informed and involved beyond game day
- Introduce an annual participant experience survey to track satisfaction and guide improvements

KPI: Improved participant experience scores from annual survey

Pillar 3: **Pathways** – Objectives & Initiatives

3. PATHWAYS

Objective: Develop clear pathways for players, coaches, and officials from grassroots to elite, ensuring long-term engagement and talent progression

3.1 Ensure seamless transitions between participation experiences

Initiatives:

- Connect school participants with local clubs to sustain engagement beyond introductory programs and create opportunities across Flag and Tackle codes
- Implement a system to track player progression across pathways in either code
- Ensure national and state organisations offer connected pathways for participants to continue their involvement in the sport across both codes

KPI: Percentage of school participants transitioning into club football

3.2 Strengthen pathways from grassroots to elite

Initiatives:

- Define structured, age based competition levels to support long-term player development
- Expand intra-state and inter-state competitions to provide clear stepping stones for progression
- Strengthen links between domestic programs and elite opportunities through different partnerships

KPI: Availability of structured competitions that support player development

3.3 Support non-playing transitions to retain expertise

Initiatives:

- Establish transition programs to help players move into coaching, officiating, and administration
- Encourage clubs to mentor former players into leadership roles
- Develop an alumni network to keep experienced individuals engaged in the sport

KPI: Tenure of coaches, officials, and administrators in roles post-transition

3.4 Improve club governance and development resources

Initiatives:

- Implement national club development standards to improve governance, coaching, and player support
- Implement ASC Game Plan or other national platform with best practices, tools, and training materials
- Introduce mentoring and professional development programs for club leaders, coaches, and officials

KPI: Percentage of clubs meeting national governance and development benchmarks

Pillar 4: **Elite Performance** – Objectives & Initiatives

4. ELITE PERFORMANCE

Objective: Build a high-performance system to identify, develop and retain elite talent, increase competitive opportunities, and prepare for international success

4.1 Identify and develop talent for LA28 and Brisbane 32 Olympics

Initiatives:

- Implement a structured talent identification framework targeting athletes from within and outside the sport for LA28
- Establish a national scouting network to identify elite talent for Brisbane 32 and develop long term pathways
- Use state and national-level camps to assess, develop, and refine athletes with high potential

KPI: Qualification for LA28 and placement in IFAF or Olympic pathway events

4.2 Develop world-class elite coaching

Initiatives:

- Identify and recruit top coaching talent domestically and internationally to lead high-performance programs
- Partner with the NFL and other elite coaching organisations to provide best practice training and mentorship
- Establish elite coaching certification programs with a standardised development pathway

KPI: Number of coaches completing elite coaching certification programs

4.3 Increase competitive game time for elite athletes

Initiatives:

- Increase elite-level competitive opportunities
- Expand structured elite competitions with more frequent and higher quality matchups
- Develop an international competition plan to provide athletes with greater exposure to elite-level play

KPI: Frequency and quality of elite-level competitions available to top athletes

4.4 Build sustainable high-performance program

Initiatives:

- Establish an elite daily high-performance environment for elite Men's and Women's squads
- Implement structured training plans, including nutrition, sports science, and mental performance support
- Integrate elite transfer and junior elite pathways athletes to develop depth within the Olympic program

KPI: Establish elite daily high-performance environment for elite Men's and Women's squads

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