



# AFL GIPPSLAND ANNUAL REPORT 2016



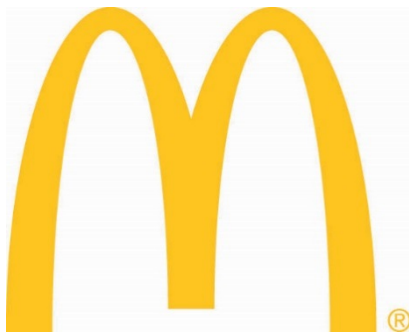
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## Commission Chair report

I begin by congratulating all 2016 premiership winners in football and netball at all levels of competition across Gippsland. Lifetime memories and friendships have been made. Clubs spend 12 months of the year planning and working on achieving success in each of our competitions. Thanks to all league personnel, mostly volunteers, who ensure that our competitions are properly run and presented.



The performance of our staff, once again led very capably by Travis Switzer, has been an absolute highlight. Their work ethic, professionalism, enthusiasm and teamwork is excellent. On behalf of the Commission, thanks to one and all for your contributions to Gippsland football in the last 12 months.

At the Commission level we have farewelled Trevor Wilson, Mikaela Power and John Anderson since our last annual meeting. All three contributed significantly during their time on the Commission. Ongoing Commissioners Paul Buckley, Andy Francis, Les Mathieson, Tracey Dear, John Schelling, John Brookes and Cayte Hoppner have continued to show a vision and passion for Gippsland football that has been invaluable to our staff and the wider football community. They are a great group to work with and I thank them for their efforts.

Dwindling numbers of players in the 16-18 year age groups are causing major problems for both clubs and leagues across Gippsland. Through necessity, short term restructuring has occurred in a number of leagues through 2016 and into 2017. However, the need to complete a major review for the provision of junior football continues. Hopefully this process will conclude with the appropriate action taken to fulfil our current needs.

The South Gippsland Junior Structures Review was completed and implemented in 2016. I now see this competition growing and continuing to thrive into the future. Diligent work by our football development managers Chelsea, Adrian, Mick and Matt has seen a significant increase in participation in the 8-14 year age groups across Gippsland. Our Gippsland Region Development Work Plans are regularly updated and show the huge range of activities they are involved in throughout the year.

In early 2016 our major review of senior football league structures was concluded and announced. The Commission approved the setting up of a new league in with nine clubs to commence the 2017 season. This left the Alberton Football Netball League with eight clubs and the Ellinbank and District Football League with 10 clubs. The Korumburra-Bena Football Netball Club appealed against this decision and were successful in gaining admission to the newly created West Gippsland Football Netball Competition, bringing it to 10 clubs and leaving the Alberton league with seven.

Well into the 2017 season the new West Gippsland competition is meeting all expectations and hopefully it can be left to consolidate in its current form over the next few seasons. The competition was set up with an advisory committee that answers directly to the Commission – a governance structure that is new in Country Victoria. Operations co-ordinator Jason Membrey and the advisory committee, in conjunction with the member clubs, have done an excellent job in getting the whole organisation up and running.

The seven-club Alberton league will need to be monitored into the future with an ongoing need to best provide football and netball for those clubs. The re-structured 10-club Ellinbank league has produced pleasing results so far

Early in season 2017 the 10 Gippsland League clubs voted to replace their existing board with an advisory committee, similar to the model adopted by West Gippsland FNC. The new group has been installed and hopefully moving forward we see many positive actions initiated to support the clubs.

There has been astounding growth in female football across Gippsland. New teams at open and youth level have been set up and are now operating for the 2017 season. With huge interest guaranteeing ongoing growth into the future, existing male football clubs and leagues need to become involved in order to maximise the exciting possibilities that lie ahead.

For the following reasons, I see a need to consolidate governance of our Umpire Associations across Gippsland with satellite training bases:

- Enable us to employ full time coaches to improve standards and improve recruitment numbers as well as retention of those who have joined panels already
- Improve consistency by allowing umpires to spread their wings and gain experience working in different leagues
- Enable us to provide Umpire Advocate training to support our umpires at tribunal meetings
- Provide a professional point of contact for clubs and leagues with umpiring issues or enquiries
- Provide consistency of umpire payments
- Provide consistency with umpire allocations and appointments
- Provide consistency with club and player behaviour and most disciplined club reports

Our acceptance by the broader Gippsland football community has led to some issues.

We have an urgent need to update our grossly inadequate regional administration centre facilities. With up to 15-16 staff members trying to work in facilities built to house four or five, the situation is clearly untenable. While the Andrews Labour Government has generously indicated that funding will be made available in the future to provide adequate new facilities for us we really have to address the issue in the interim period. Clearly our staff are finding it very difficult to continue their magnificent work when they are so badly crammed into their office facility.

With the size of our budget now our RAC clearly needs a qualified finance officer and administration support for our staff. The Commission is acutely aware of both our facilities and finance issues and will strive to improve the situation.

In conclusion, 2016 has been a challenging but never-the-less, progressive year for the Commission. We have continued to build on the solid foundations set up by the inaugural members and these are exciting times for Gippsland football. We will continue to provide professional support to those from local communities who are so passionate in their participation in our game of Australian football and I look forward to the coming year.



**Brian Quigley**

Chair, AFL Gippsland Commission

## Region General Manager's report

Season 2016 represented a year of progression and significant change for football in Gippsland.

AFL Gippsland's principle task for 2016 was to build on the solid foundations laid in the first few years of the Regional Administration Centre.



Our core objectives remain the same:

- To promote and grow the AFL football community in Gippsland through higher participation at all levels
- To provide leadership and support to the football and wider sporting community

I believe we have enjoyed a good degree of success in both objectives this year and put things in place to further this work in 2017 and beyond.

Undoubtedly our most significant step was completing our Senior Football Leagues Review which will be implemented for season 2017. The review was a massive undertaking from AFL Gippsland staff, commissioners, the review committee and all of our stakeholders in Gippsland. With something of this nature being so important to the future of football in the region it goes without saying that there was going to be some challenges along the way. The review committee released its recommendations to all stakeholders and the commission during 2016. The review included a significant amount of consultation with the key stakeholders and analysis of data and information. The feedback from clubs in the region on the final recommendations was in most part very positive.

I would like to thank the members of the review panel and the clubs and leagues involved for the commitment given to the review and the collaborative approach to the outcomes, as well as Netball Victoria for their involvement in the project. We now prepare for what will be a very exciting and challenging 2017 season and we look forward to working with clubs to ensure that the new structures implemented will be a big success.

In addition to the senior review, we have been working closely with AFL Victoria in its roll out of the Community Club Sustainability Program, which introduced a points system in 2016 and is beginning the planning for implementing a salary cap across the state for season 2017.

This represents a lot of a change in a short period of time, but it shows that those in a position to do so, are actively addressing the concerns of the football community. All of these measures are designed to establish a structure that allows all clubs in Gippsland the ability to be sustainable into the future, which is the main focus of AFL Gippsland.

There was also some significant change in the governance structures in Gippsland during 2016. Officially the East Gippsland Commission was wound up and merged with the AFL Gippsland Commission. The staff of Adrian Bromage and Rod Twining became AFL Gippsland staff members, with both proving great additions to our team. Tracey Dear and Les Mathieson officially came onto the AFL Gippsland Commission and provide us with great local knowledge and a high level understanding of football in the East Gippsland region. I would like to thank all AFL East Gippsland commissioners who, during difficult circumstances, did a fantastic job in implementing a number of great initiatives during their time on the commission.

I would like to thank all of the AFL Gippsland team for their tireless efforts and commitment to our organisation during 2016.

We are fortunate to have many people who genuinely care about community football and netball pulling in the same direction, from our development managers Matthew Cracknell, Chelsea Caple,

Leigh Brown, Michael Roberts and Adrian Bromage through to our administration staff in Tim Sexton, Damen Francis, Sarah Coleman, Daniel Heathcote, Nick Cullis and Rod Twining. With limited resources on hand they all go above and beyond and I appreciate the hours they put in to ensure we meet the needs of our key stakeholders.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of the AFL Gippsland commissioners during 2016. Their willingness to undertake significant tasks, such as the senior football leagues review, in their personal time demonstrates their dedication to improving the state of our great game at a local level. There is no doubt that the review would have led to some sleepless nights for the commissioners, but their ability to show strong leadership during a difficult time is a measure of their commitment to football and netball clubs in Gippsland. Led by Brian Quigley, the commissioners have been a significant support to the AFL Gippsland staffing group and we can't thank them enough for their efforts during 2016.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and assistance AFL Gippsland has received from the leagues, clubs, umpires associations, players and volunteers throughout the year. The introduction of new player points and salary cap systems has been challenging, in particular for club volunteers, but we could not be more positive of the clubs approach to this and their support for measures that will hopefully lead to a more sustainable future for clubs.

I would like to acknowledge all the AFL Gippsland Regional Administration Centre leagues and associations. AFL Gippsland now has 12 bodies that form part of the AFL Gippsland RAC – some have been with us since its inception and others are new members. We appreciate that joining our RAC would have been a significant decision for leagues and associations and for that AFL Gippsland appreciates the trust that each body has shown in our organisation. The hope for AFL Gippsland is that all leagues and associations join the RAC over time and that we can continue to build on the great work that has occurred up to this point. All of these leagues and associations are made up of passionate volunteers and I am continually amazed at the work load they take on, often without a lot of acknowledgement.

One of the most encouraging aspects to come out of the reviews we have been conducting is the passion of the Gippsland football community. The AFL Gippsland Commission continues to strive to be a sustainable business that has the necessary capacity to grow the game.

During 2016 our football development managers reached 7,000 more school participants than the Gippsland region ever has before. It was a significant effort from the staff and I cannot thank them enough for their commitment to this, given there was a challenging target set at the start of the year by the organisation. It is vitally important that we reach as many children in schools so that we are continuing to build the game from the bottom up. Our hope is that these kids eventually end up at a club playing our great game from Auskick all the way through to seniors. AFL Gippsland also employed a number of game development officers to provide more resources and to ensure that we met the needs of all schools in Gippsland.

Sponsorships for our member leagues continued to grow, as did their social media presence and level of community engagement, with various causes using their local football and netball leagues as a vehicle to promote important community messages about mental health, responsible gambling and domestic violence.



I cannot thank Stuart Evans and his team enough for their unrivalled support of Gippsland football and remain committed to ensuring it is a partnership that benefits all parties.

In addition to our ongoing alliance with Evans Petroleum, AFL Gippsland struck up partnerships with a host of other great Gippsland businesses that enable all parties greater opportunity to thrive.

Our conversations with Traralgon Toyota started with leasing vehicles and developed into a significant partnership that has continued to grow from 2016 and into 2017 when some exciting developments around female football. McDonald's Gippsland threw its support behind our history-making Youth Girls competition before moving on to support the roll out of our extensive junior academy program. Saltwater Properties provided an abundance of accommodation vouchers that assisted in fundraising activities and the likes of Crowe Horwath and Chris Humphrey Office National continue to support what do. Discussions have also been had with other organisations including Federation Training and Rent 4 Keeps, with some exciting plans in the works for 2017.

In addition to this we facilitated sponsorship agreements for our newly formed competitions, with Alex Scott & Staff, Bendigo Community Bank, The Drain Man, Burra Foods, GBS Recruitment and Greyhound Racing Victoria, getting behind the in West and Southern Gippsland competitions for 2017.

You can read more about our social responsibility work in this annual report, but I am extremely proud of the work we have done in this space, with the support our football and netball community. Activities such as Ice and illicit drug education, mental health, domestic violence and responsible gambling awareness are so important to our communities, beyond the football ground and netball court, and we look forward to continuing that work and more in 2017.

The year 2017 will be exciting and challenging for AFL Gippsland in equal measure. There is much work to be done in bedding down the review recommendations across the region including the preparation of the newly formed West Gippsland Football Netball Competition. Most avid Gippsland football and netball followers would be aware of the challenging feedback that has been received from the review recommendations. It is important that AFL Gippsland continues to offer services to any stakeholders that have voiced their concerns as we continue to search for the best football and netball structures for clubs in our region.

A review of underage structures will be another big undertaking that will commence in 2017. We understand the challenges at the under 16 (fourths) and under 18 (thirds) level for a number of clubs in our region. Retention and recruitment of players for clubs at all age groups will be our main focus and we hope to do all we can to improve the current situation for all clubs.

I am very proud of the progress AFL Gippsland has made in 2016 and look forward to continuing to work with the football community in improving football in Gippsland in 2017.

**Travis Switzer**

Region General Manager AFL Gippsland

## 2016 COMMISSION MEMBERS

Brian Quigley (Chair)

John Anderson

Trevor Wilson

Paul Buckley

Andrew Francis

John Brookes OAM

Les Mathieson

Tracey Dear

Cayte Hoppner

John Schelling

## MISSION

AFL Gippsland was established to promote and grow the Australian football community in Gippsland through higher participation at all levels and by providing leadership and support to the football and wider sporting communities.

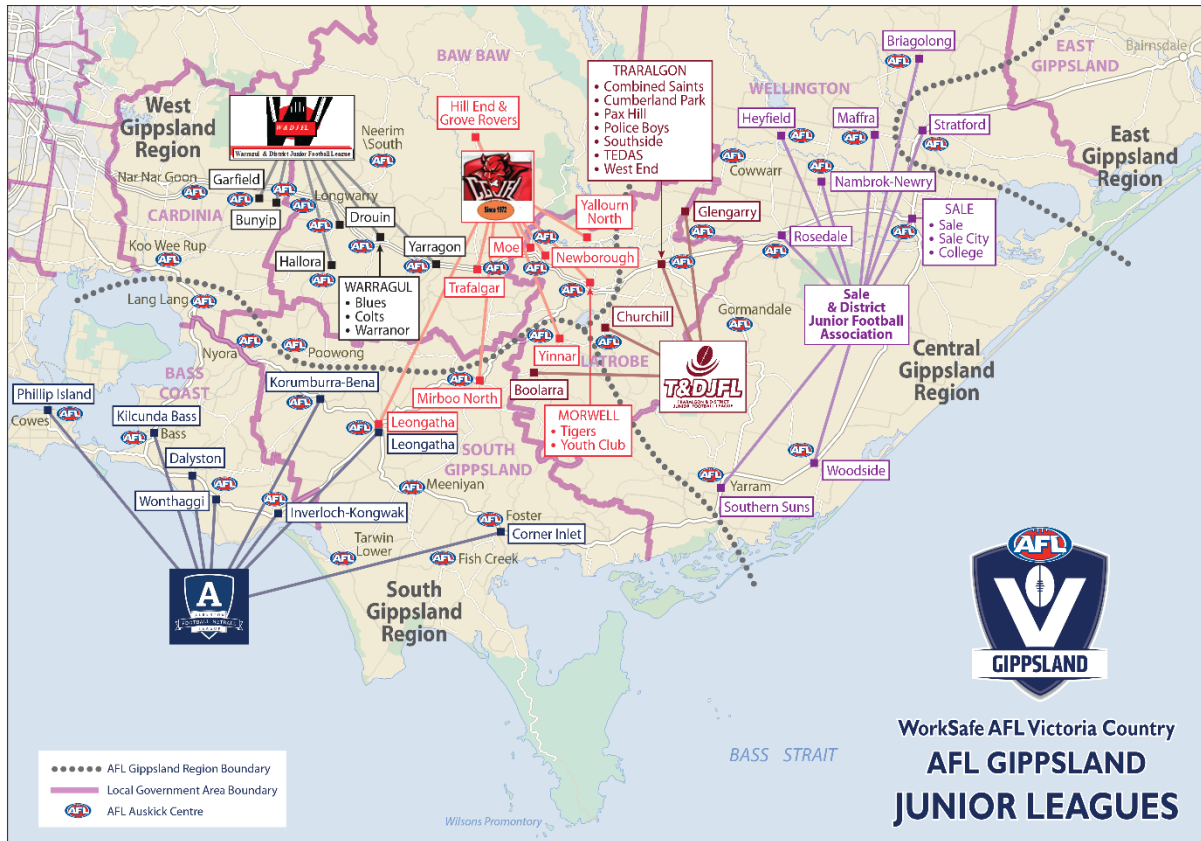
AFL Gippsland is one of 13 AFL Victoria regional commissions responsible for overseeing the governance of football in its region. In 2016 the AFL Gippsland region encompassed:

- Seven senior competitions; Gippsland League, North Gippsland, East Gippsland, Omeo & District and Alberton football netball leagues and Mid Gippsland and Ellinbank and District football leagues
- Five junior competitions; Traralgon & District, Warragul & District, Central Gippsland and Alberton junior football leagues and Sale & District and Bairnsdale & District junior football associations
- Five umpires associations; Gippsland, Latrobe Valley, Sale, South Gippsland and East Gippsland
- Seven councils; Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Casey-Cardinia, East Gippsland, Latrobe City, South Gippsland, Wellington
- A geographic region stretching from Nar Nar Goon in the west to Orbost in the east, south to Phillip Island and north to Omeo
- An estimated 130 registered clubs
- Approximately 13,000 registered football participants

In 2016 the commission was made up of 10 volunteers and its key objectives include:

- Participation
- Community
- Engagement
- Fans
- Talent & Second Tier
- Facilities
- People and Culture

## 2016 AFL GIPPSLAND REGION MAPS



## 2016 REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

### STAFF

**Region General Manager:** Travis Switzer

**Media and Marketing Manager:** Damen Francis

**Senior Operations Manager – RAC:** Tim Sexton

**League Operations Coordinator:** Rod Twining

**League Operations Coordinator:** Daniel Heathcote

**League Operations Coordinator:** Lynn Whelan

**Umpiring and League Operations Coordinator:** Nick Cullis

**Football development manager – East:** Adrian Bromage

**Football development manager – South:** Chelsea Caple

**Football development manager – Central:** Michael Roberts

**Football development manager – West:** Matt Cracknell

### 2017 RAC MEMBER LEAGUES AND ASSOCIATIONS

TRFM Gippsland League

AGL Loy Yang North Gippsland Football Netball League

Alberton Football Netball League

East Gippsland Football Netball League

Omeo and District Football Netball League

Traralgon and District Junior Football League

Bairnsdale and District Junior Football Association

AFL Gippsland Youth Girls Football League

Gippsland Umpires Association

Sale Umpires Association

South Gippsland Umpires Association

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

In 2016, AFL Gippsland participated in a number of initiatives to engage with the community.

Partnering with GippSport, Gippsland Women’s Health and Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault, AFL Gippsland helped TRFM Gippsland League host Orange Round to raise awareness of violence against women and children.



AFL Gippsland teamed with the Gippsland Mental Health Alliance to raise awareness and highlight the importance of good mental health within sporting clubs and communities.

The AFL Gippsland Mental Health Round initiative involved all seven senior football and netball leagues in the region, with one feature match in each dedicated to the cause. Home teams in every grade wore light blue football socks and netball bibs and played for an overall Mental Health Round cup. In addition to the themed round, community events were held at Lakes Entrance, Yinnar and Warragul football netball clubs, featuring AFL champion and event ambassador Wayne Schwass as guest speaker.



AFL Gippsland also worked alongside Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, with North Gippsland FNL hosting a Gambling's Not A Game round and 12 clubs signing the Sporting Clubs Program charter.



Another significant undertaking in the social responsibility space was the introduction of the Gippsland Footy's Fight Against Ice program.

Ice education was rolled out at 19 football and netball clubs across Gippsland, featuring ex-AFL players Gavin Crosisca and Mark Eustice and 2016 Bass Coast Young Citizen of the Year Rebecca Slavin as guest speakers sharing their respective personal battles with addiction.



## GAME DEVELOPMENT REPORT

AFL Gippsland engaged in a host of events and activities for the purposes of promoting football to different sections of the Gippsland community. These included:

- Farm World Lardner Park and East Gippsland Field Days
- Australia Post AFL Community Camp – St Kilda FC to Traralgon, featuring:
  - o Primary school Superclinics
  - o Visits to hospitals, nursing homes and local businesses
  - o Community dinner
- AFL Player Appearance Program, including:
  - o Carlton to Leongatha/Korumburra
  - o Collingwood to Traralgon
  - o Essendon to Morwell/Thorpdale/Hill End
  - o Melbourne to Sale
- Toyota Good For Footy Dealer of the Round events at Moe and Sale
- Access All Abilities Football Boundary Umpire Program
- VLine Cup and Youth Girls Shield



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Other notable achievements from 2016 include:

- Successful staging of the Evans Petroleum Cup U16 and U18 interleague carnival
- Successful staging of the Gippsland Junior Interleague Football Championships
- The continued development of the Gippsland Youth Girls Football League, which has grown from three to 10 teams in three years, across two divisions
- The introduction of the AFL Gippsland Coaches and Community Awards night
- Assisting Latrobe City and AFL Victoria host the VLine Cup Junior State Football Carnival



## 2016 SENIOR PREMIERS



**Gippsland League premier: Maffra**



**Alberton FNL premier: Fish Creek**



**North Gippsland FNL premier: Sale City**



**Mid Gippsland FL premier: Newborough**



**Ellinbank District FL premier: Cora Lynn**



**East Gippsland FNL premier: Lindenow**



**Omeo District FNL premier: Lindenow**