



Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Striving for September:

*A strategic plan for the Victorian Football Umpires'
Association*



INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present Striving for September 2014-2017 - a strategic plan for the VFUA.

Like any organization it is important that we have plans in place for the future. For the VFUA this is even more important given the transient nature of our membership, the high turnover of executive members & the potential loss of corporate knowledge.

Appropriate planning needs to be done to ensure the VFUA focuses on longer term goals whilst continuing to plan for, & deliver relevant & timely services to its members on an ongoing basis. Incoming executive committees should use the strategic plan when developing annual work plans to ensure that these work plans are aligned with the future direction of the association.

This plan builds on the original strategic plan, reflects on the changes that it drove & updates the strategic priorities for the next four years. I hope that it will prove useful to members, future executive committees & external organizations in understanding the vision, mission & priorities of the VFUA.

Peter Kelly
VFUA Executive Officer





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Leadership

to have in place an Executive Committee capable of providing strong leadership of the association

Membership

to consistently strive for 100% membership of all listed umpires by being credible, relevant & respected

Representation

to represent members in industrial & workplace issues in a professional & timely manner

Relationship

to maintain & foster a healthy working relationship with AFL Victoria

Fees & Conditions

to negotiate the best conditions package for our members

Social

to organize & deliver social events that are valued & well attended by our members

Communication

to ensure communication between members, the Executive Committee, AFL Victoria & any other relevant organisations occurs in a timely manner using appropriate methods

Life Members

to maintain & develop a link with & recognize the important contribution made by life members

Recognition

to recognize the achievements of the association & its members

Finances

to manage finances of the VFUA in a responsible manner that maximizes benefits to members

LEADERSHIP



to have in place an Executive Committee capable of providing strong leadership of the association

Discussion/Rationale

- Given the high turnover of umpires on the VFL squads, it is important that the VFUA is proactive & ensures that it has capable leaders in place to serve on the Executive Committee;
- Members of the Executive Committee are not likely to have much work life experience & will use their time on the committee to develop new leadership, communication, organizing & team skills;
- The President & Vice-President of the VFUA need to lead the association whilst balancing their own work commitments, umpiring careers & personal lives;
- The Executive Committee needs to focus on strategic & operational issues during its term in office whilst maintaining a good working relationship with AFL Victoria & servicing the needs of its members.

Initiatives

- Actively seek out potential Executive Committee members well before the AGM; involve potential members in various projects prior to their nomination to the Executive Committee;
- Experienced Executive Committee members will lead by example, & actively mentor less experienced members;
- Leaders & potential leaders will be mentored by past leaders of the association;
- The Executive Committee will access experienced resources (life members & past presidents).

Key Performance Indicators

- Nominations are received for all Executive Committee positions prior to the AGM;
- Nominees for president & vice-president have served on the Executive Committee & are ably qualified & suitable to lead the association;
- Executive Committee is filled by capable & motivated members;
- Mentoring arrangements, informal & formal, are in place

MEMBERSHIP



to consistently strive for 100% membership of all listed umpires by being credible, relevant & respected

Discussion/Rationale

- The VFUA has prided itself on having a high percentage of eligible umpires become members;
- In order to make membership attractive, the VFUA must change with the times whilst ensuring programs & services suit the needs of members;
- Every effort should be made to induct new umpires in their first year as someone who doesn't join in their first year is less likely to join in following years;
- It is important to communicate both tangible & intangible benefits of membership to umpires;
- It is important that umpires understand the journey that has taken place regarding entitlements, ground conditions & safety as these are not always apparent to umpires;
- The VFUA needs to assess its performance on a regular basis & use the results in its planning processes.

Initiatives

- A professional induction program to be conducted for new umpires each year;
- All umpires to be provided with a budget breakdown so they are informed on income & expenditure for the year;
- Membership fees should be set as low as is reasonably possible & different payment options made available;
- The VFUA to conduct a biennial members' survey to gauge the performance of the association;
- The results of the survey will be compared to previous results & used to plan, inform, change or enhance membership services.

Key Performance Indicators

- Percentage of potential members who join the VFUA;
- Outcomes of biennial survey.

REPRESENTATION

to represent members in industrial and workplace issues in a professional and timely manner



Discussion/Rationale

- One of the key roles of the VFUA is to represent members should a workplace issue arise;
- It is important that a level of trust is developed between the VFUA and AFL Victoria to ensure open and honest communication channels to resolve any workplace issue at the earliest opportunity;
- Appropriate confidentiality must be maintained whilst the workplace issue is being addressed;
- The VFUA must be prepared to commit to obtaining expert industrial, legal or HR advice to support the resolution of any workplace issue;
- The VFUA will ensure that AFL Victoria has appropriate workplace policies, procedures and guidelines in place and will work with AFL Victoria in the development, review and communication of these policies;
- Members must have confidence that the VFUA will address their matter in a professional, timely and confidential manner.

Initiatives

- Annual review of AFL Victoria workplace policies that impact on umpires;
- Workplace changes are discussed openly and input sought to minimize any impact on the umpiring group;
- Regular meetings with AFL Victoria to be kept informed of pending changes to the VFL competitions and to inform how things are progressing in the umpiring group;
- Regular meetings organized with squad leadership groups and AFL Victoria to discuss more informal matters.

Key Performance Indicators

- Umpires workplace issues are addressed with AFL Victoria;
- AFL Victoria policies, procedures and guidelines are reviewed annually;
- Regular meetings with AFL Victoria are conducted during the year.

RELATIONSHIP

to maintain & foster a healthy working relationship with AFL Victoria



Discussion/Rationale

- It is important that the VFUA & AFL Victoria work together to make the umpiring experience an enjoyable one for umpires appointed to AFL Victoria squads;
- It is important that both organizations respect the role each play in this umpiring experience.

Initiatives

- VFUA & AFL Victoria will jointly organize the Paul Anderson Memorial Shield (mini-Olympics);
- VFUA to invite the umpires' coach to address the annual induction session for new umpires;
- Weekly Quality Assurance Program reports tracked & progress monitored;
- Senior members of the VFUA will attend AFL Victoria functions;
- VFUA invite AFL Victoria to have a guest speaker at one association meeting each year.

Key Performance Indicators

- Successful staging of the Paul Anderson Memorial Shield;
- Successful induction program;
- Weekly communication with AFL Victoria regarding the Quality Assurance Program;
- AFL Victoria representative attends one association meeting a year;
- Attendance at AFL Victoria functions.



FEES & CONDITIONS



to negotiate the best fees & conditions package for our members

Discussion/Rationale

- The successful negotiation of fees & conditions packages is one of the most important tasks the VFUA performs on behalf of its members. The VFUA has long prided itself on the fact that it's members have received fees & conditions that are superior to any other state league in Australia. Some of these state leagues are closing the gap which is good for umpiring in general;
- The VFUA should be supportive of these associations whilst continuing to advance access to conditions & entitlements for its own members. Some consideration needs to be given to the available resources of AFL Victoria & requests should not be excessive, so as to undermine the healthy working relationship with AFL Victoria. However, where required, the VFUA must stand by requests that are reasonable & justifiable, & do everything possible to see that such requests are granted. Every endeavour should be made to resolve any disputes that occur during the negotiation process.

Initiatives

- Fees & Conditions Agreement to be applicable for multiple years (currently 3 year agreements);
- Fees & Conditions Working Party to be formed early in the preceding year with representation from all squads;
- AFL Victoria to be notified of the intended process at this early stage;
- Members to be informed & consulted to ensure that all ideas are considered & to gain buy-in of these members to the proposal.
- Regular meetings with AFL Victoria to discuss ongoing issues arising from the fees & conditions package & potential workplace & football changes which might impact on umpiring in the VFL competitions.

Key Performance Indicators

- Fees & Conditions package agreed prior to end of preceding season;
- Match payment fees increase versus inflation & other wage indices;
- Fees & conditions do not drop below levels of previous agreement.

SOCIAL

to organize & deliver social events that are valued & well attended by our members



Discussion/Rationale

- Social events provide a forum for members, who may only see each others on limited occasions, to interact in a relaxed manner. These social events provide an environment where lifelong friendships can be started to enhance the overall umpiring experience;
- VFUA merchandise & group photos also promote an identity with other umpires & the association;
- Social events also provide a forum for recognition of umpiring achievements.

Key Performance Indicators

- Social calendar is organized, events are well attended & enjoyable;
- Group photos organized & distributed;
- Merchandise ordered & distributed.

Initiatives

- A well planned social calendar for each season;
- Group photos are organized;
- VFUA Merchandise is organized;
- A VFUA shirt or polo shirt is provided to new umpires as part of their induction process.



COMMUNICATION

to ensure effective and timely communication between members, the Executive Committee, AFL Victoria & other relevant organisations



Discussion/Rationale

- Communication underpins all of the other strategic priorities of the VFUA. Communication between the Executive, the members (directly & via track representatives), AFL Victoria & the VFL Umpiring Department is vital if all are to play their part in football;
- There is a suite of technical communication methods that can be used in conjunction with face to face communication. The VFUA messages can range from the strategic (plans, reports etc) to the tactical (meetings, emails, SMS) so the association needs to embrace all those methods which are practical & efficient to get its message out;
- Equally important is the need for the Executive Committee to hear back from members. This is done formally & informally. Informal methods include ongoing dialogue with members & track representatives whilst more formal methods include feedback at meetings & responses to the biennial membership survey;
- The VFUA should also maintain contact with Life Members other state based associations & the AFLUA.

Initiatives

- Track representatives to communicate with their squads & encourage members to raise issues & provide feedback;
- The Executive Committee to communicate regularly via association meetings, the annual general meeting, email & SMS;
- Regular updating of the VFUA web site & Facebook pages;
- Regularly publish & distribute the Man-in-White newsletter;
- Develop & maintain effective communication channels with AFL Victoria;
- Maintain effective communication channels with kindred bodies.

Key Performance Indicators

- Regular reporting by track representatives of issues and activities;
- VFUA web site and Facebook pages updated;
- Three issues of Man-in-White published annually;
- Regular meetings with AFL Victoria .

LIFE MEMBERS



to maintain & develop a link with & recognize the important contribution made by life members

Discussion/Rationale

- Life membership of the VFUA is only awarded to umpires who have demonstrated outstanding services to the association;
- The VFUA has an extremely distinguished list of life members willing & able to pass on information, advice & anecdotes about umpiring, & young umpires can benefit greatly from mixing with such people;
- The VFUA (& Victorian umpiring generally) have a rich & proud history, & the Life Members' Program provides a means for maintaining that history & passing it along. Given that a primary focus of the VFUA is on its people, this strategic priority is most important.

Key Performance Indicators

- A professional life membership function is conducted each year;
- Communication with life members is undertaken;
- Nominations for honorary life membership are received & voted on at the annual general meeting.

Initiatives

- The Life Members' Program is assigned to a senior office bearer each year;
- A life members' function is held annually;
- Regular communication occurs with life members;
- Database of life members is kept up to date & reflects desired level of involvement in the Program;
- Worthy nominations for honorary life membership of the VFUA are sought & voted on at the annual general meeting.



RECOGNITION

to recognize the achievements of the association & it's members



Discussion/Rationale

- Despite not actively seeking it, most umpires get great satisfaction from their achievements being recognized. It reflects well on the association when achievements are recognized at the appropriate level;
- The association has a proud history of providing an essential service to umpires. A great number of individuals have made large contributions that have allowed the VFUA to get to the position of strength it is in today. These contributions, and the achievements of the association, must be recorded for the future, to provide a history of where we have been & the journey that has occurred during the association's short history.

Key Performance Indicators

- Letters of recognition for milestones sent within a week of milestone;
- Recognition appropriately recognized at association meetings & AGM;
- Statistics are maintained & included in the annual report.

Initiatives

- Letter of recognition for milestones;
- Milestones recognized at association meetings;
- Members achievements posted on the VFUA website & included in the Man-in-White;
- Provision of trophies for grand final umpires & award recipients;
- AGM focus on awards & achievements;
- Comprehensive match statistics available to members;
- Achievements recorded in the annual report & other VFUA records.



FINANCES

to manage finances of the VFUA in a responsible manner
that maximizes benefits to members



Discussion/Rationale

- It is important that the VFUA develops & maintains a sound financial framework for the running of the association;
- The VFUA is required to have its financial statements audited each year by an independent financial auditor. The financial statements form part of the annual report which is provided to members & life members at the annual general meeting;
- The VFUA is also required to provide a copy of its financial statements to the Department of Justice in accordance with the *associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Key Performance Indicators

- Budget is developed & approved by members at the first association meeting in each calendar year;
- Regular updates on budget status are provided to the Executive Committee during the financial year;
- The financial statements are audited prior to inclusion in the annual report;
- The annual statement is prepared & lodged with the Department of Justice in accordance with legislated timeframes.

Initiatives

- Annual budget is developed which identifies income & expenditure for the financial year;
- Funds are managed in accordance with the requirements set forth in the VFUA constitution;
- A independent auditor is appointed each year to audit the financial statements.

