



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

A strategic plan for the Victorian Football Umpires' Association

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the 2018-2021 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 and 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, and deliver relevant and 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 and updates the strategic priorities for the next four years. I hope that it will prove useful to members, future executive committees and external organizations in understanding the strategic 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 and respected

Advocacy & Representation

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

Relationship

to maintain and foster a healthy working relationship with AFL Victoria

Fees & Conditions

to ensure our agreement is legally compliant, differentiates between each umpiring discipline and level of football competition, ensures that payments appropriately recognise the different skill levels and commitment required and is flexible to provide avenues for AFL Victoria to meet their objectives for the development and progression of umpires

Social

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

Welfare

to explore opportunities to partner with AFL Victoria on a range of wellbeing programs and services for our members

Communication

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

Life Members

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

Recognition

to recognize the achievements of the association and 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 and 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 and will use their time on the committee to develop new leadership, communication, organizing and team skills;
- The President and Vice-President of the VFUA need to lead the association whilst balancing their own work commitments, umpiring careers and personal lives;
- The Executive Committee needs to focus on strategic and operational issues during its term in office whilst maintaining a good working relationship with AFL Victoria and servicing the needs of its members.
- The VFUA Executive hosts a planning day early in the new year so that plans for the forthcoming year are developed and tasks assigned.
- Planning objectives and workplans are aligned with the VFUA Strategic Plan.
- The VFUA needs to assess its performance on a regular basis and use the results in its planning processes.

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, and actively mentor less experienced members;
- Leaders and potential leaders will be mentored by past leaders of the association;
- The Executive Committee will access experienced resources (life members and past presidents).
- Appropriate planning is conducted, planning objectives developed and tasks assigned and monitored.
- 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 and used to plan, inform, change or enhance membership services.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Nominations are received for all Executive Committee positions prior to the AGM;
- Nominees for president and vice-president have served on the Executive Committee and are ably qualified and suitable to lead the association;
- Executive Committee is filled by capable and motivated members;
- Mentoring arrangements, informal and formal, are in place.
- Planning objectives and plans developed.
- Planning day conducted.
- Outcomes of biennial survey.

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 and 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 and intangible benefits of membership to umpires;
- It is important that umpires understand the journey that has taken place regarding entitlements, ground conditions and safety as these are not always apparent to umpires;
- To attract membership and provide value for money, the VFUA will develop a partners' program for members.

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 and expenditure for the year;
- Membership fees should be set as low as is reasonably possible and different payment options made available;
- Partners are identified and included in VFUA Partners' Program;
- Partners are promoted to members as part of their membership, orders taken and goods delivered.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Positive feedback from Induction program
- Percentage of potential members who join the VFUA;
- Usage of partners' program and results from member biennial survey.

ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION

To advocate for & represent members in industrial & workplace issues in a professional & timely manner

Discussion/Rationale:

- One of the key roles of the VFUA is to advocate for and 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 work with AFL Victoria in the development, review and communication of employment policies;
- The VFUA will support AFL Victoria in providing compliance training for members on employment related policies and procedures;
- Members must have confidence that the VFUA will address their matter in a professional, timely and confidential manner.

Initiatives:

- A partnership based on a shared vision and mutual respect is developed between AFL Victoria and the VFUA to assist the Umpiring Department deliver its programs within the provisions of the employment agreement.
- 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 and foster a healthy working relationship with AFL Victoria, the AFLUA & other kindred associations

Discussion/Rationale:

- It is important that the VFUA and 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.
- It is important that VFUA is a trusted partner and is consulted on any changes that affect umpiring in the VFL competitions.
- The VFUA should also develop relationships with the AFLUA and other state-based associations to share ideas, information and seek support.

Initiatives:

- VFUA and AFL Victoria will jointly organize the Paul Anderson Memorial Shield (mini- Olympics);
- Weekly Quality Assurance Program reports tracked and progress monitored;
- VFUA is consulted on changes that impact on umpiring.
- Regular contact with the AFLUA on strategic and operational matters.
- Regular communication with state-based associations.
- Regular and meaningful communication between track representatives and their squads.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Successful staging of the Paul Anderson Memorial Shield;
- Weekly communication with AFL Victoria regarding the Quality Assurance Program;
- Regular updates on any changes that might impact on umpiring in the VFL competitions;
- Attendance at AFL Victoria functions.
- Feedback from biennial survey on approachability of track representatives.



FEES & CONDITIONS

To negotiate the best fees and 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.
- Each fees and conditions package is negotiated with three primary goals in mind:
 - ❑ First, to ensure members receive pay and entitlements that are, at minimum, at the level required by law.; and
 - ❑ Secondly, to differentiate between each umpiring discipline and level of football competition, and ensure that payments appropriately recognise the different skill levels and commitment required; and
 - ❑ Thirdly, provide AFL Victoria with avenues to meet their objectives for the development and progression of umpires.
- Some consideration needs to be given to the available resources of AFL Victoria and 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 and justifiable, and 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 and Conditions Agreement to be applicable for multiple years (currently 3 year agreements);
- Fees and Conditions Working Party to be formed early in the preceding year with representation from all squads;
- To consult with AFL Victoria of the intended process at this early stage;
- Members to be informed and consulted to ensure that all ideas are considered and to gain buy-in of these members to the proposal.
- Encourage AFL Victoria to consult with the VFUA as a trusted partner where such consultation is mandated in the agreement
- Regular meetings with AFL Victoria to discuss ongoing issues arising from the fees and conditions package and potential workplace and football changes which might impact on umpiring in the VFL competitions.
- Review VFL fixtures annually to highlight any issues that impact on the fees and conditions agreement.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Fees and Conditions package agreed prior to end of preceding season;
- Match payment fees increase versus inflation and other wage indices;
- Fees and conditions do not drop below levels of previous agreement.
- Consultation is instigated by AFL Victoria

SOCIAL

To organize and deliver social events that are valued and well attended by our members

Discussion/Rationale:

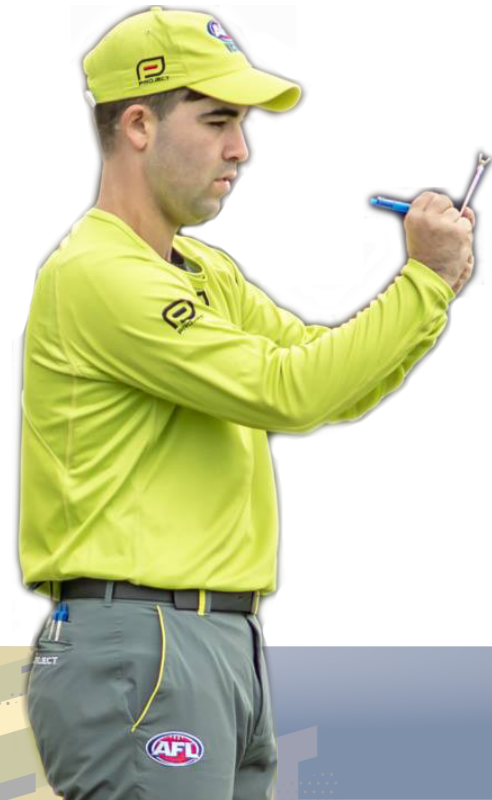
- Social events provide a forum for members, who may only see each others on limited occasions, to interact in a relaxed manner. These social events provide an environment where lifelong friendships can be started to enhance the overall umpiring experience;
- VFUA merchandise and group photos also promote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

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.
- Grand final events are planned to celebrate the year and personal achievements.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Social calendar is organized, events are well attended and enjoyable;
- Group photos organized and distributed;
- Merchandise ordered and distributed.
- Grant Final events are well organised and positive feedback received.



WELFARE

To explore opportunities to partner with AFL Victoria on a range of wellbeing programs and services

Discussion/Rationale:

- It is important that members have access to a trusted, reliable and confidential welfare service.
- The service can be provided formally by AFL Victoria with services such as its Employee Assistance Program or informally through advice given to umpires to assist them dealing with conflict, having the difficult conversation, work/life balance and other personal issues on an as-needed basis.
- The VFUA is supportive of working with AFL Victoria in identifying any welfare type programs that support members and recognise the demographics of our umpiring groups.
- The VFUA is supportive but recognises that due to its limited resources, its ability to execute such programs is limited

Initiatives:

- The VFUA partners with AFL Victoria on a range of wellbeing programs and services
- Ongoing dialogue with AFL Victoria on current services provided as an employer and encouraging usage of these services.
- Informal support is provided to members on an as-needed basis.
- Track Representatives identify and raise with Strategy Team any potential wellbeing issues.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Ongoing monitoring of wellbeing issues in consultation (where applicable) with AFL Victoria;
- Feedback from members individually and as a group.



COMMUNICATIONS

To ensure effective & 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 and via track representatives), AFL Victoria and 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, facebook, emails, SMS) so the association needs to embrace all those methods which are practical and efficient to get its message out;
- Equally important is the need for the Executive Committee to hear back from members. This is done formally and informally. Informal methods include ongoing dialogue with members and track representatives whilst more formal methods include feedback at meetings and responses to the biennial membership survey;
- The VFUA should also maintain contact with Life Members other state based associations and the AFLUA.

Initiatives:

- Track representatives to communicate with their squads & encourage members to raise issues and provide feedback;
- The Executive Committee to communicate regularly via association meetings, the annual general meeting, email and SMS;
- Regular updating of the VFUA web site and Facebook pages;
- Regularly publish and distribute the VFUA newsletter;
- Develop and 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;
- Monthly in-season newsletter published;
- Regular meetings with AFL Victoria .

LIFE MEMBERS

To maintain and develop a link with and 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 and able to pass on information, advice and anecdotes about umpiring, and young umpires can benefit greatly from mixing with such people;
- The VFUA (and Victorian umpiring generally) have a rich and proud history, and the Life Members' Program provides a means for maintaining that history and passing it along. Given that a primary focus of the VFUA is on its people, this strategic priority is most important.

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 and reflects desired level of involvement in the Program;
- Worthy nominations for honorary life membership of the VFUA are sought and voted on at the annual general meeting.

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 and voted on at the annual general meeting.



RECOGNITION

To recognize the achievements of the association and its 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 and the journey that has occurred during the association's short history.
- The VFUA provides support to AFL Victoria by passing on statistical information including milestones to the Umpiring Department.

Initiatives:

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

Key Performance Indicators:

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



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 and maintains a sound financial framework for the running of the association;
- The VFUA is required to have its financial statements reviewed each year.
- The financial statements form part of the annual report which is provided to members and 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*.

Initiatives:

- Annual budget is developed which identifies income and expenditure for the financial year;
- Funds are managed in accordance with the requirements set forth in the VFUA constitution;
- The financial statements are reviewed each year.

Key Performance Indicators:

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

