

# A-LEAGUES FRG #4



## [KEY MEETING INFORMATION]

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
26 Mar 2024	VIRTUAL (GOOGLE MEET)	6:00 PM	8:00PM

## [ATTENDEE LIST / RESPONSIBILITY]

ATTENDEES REQUESTED	ATTENDANCE	ROLE	REPRESENTATION
Nick Garcia	Attended Virtually	Meeting Chair	APL
Jack Mesley	Attended In Person	APL Representative	APL
Hannah Lidster	Attended Virtually	APL Representative	APL
Maggie Isaac	Attended In Person	APL Representative	APL
		Minutes	
Joe Aylward	Attended Virtually	Club Representative	Adelaide United FRG
David Morgan	Attended Virtually	Club Representative	Macarthur Bulls FRG
Susan Baikie	Attended Virtually	Club Representative	Wellington Phoenix FRG
Luke Welsman	Attended Virtually	Club Representative	Newcastle Jets FRG

# LEAGUES

Yousef Hussain	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Sydney FC FRG
Maria Berry	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne Victory FRG
Kathleen Crawford	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne City FRG
Harry Inns	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	WSW FRG
Erin Morrow	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Central Coast Mariners FRG
Kim Hawkins	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Perth Glory FRG
Matt Mann	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne City FRG
Daniel Hoogstra	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Western United FRG
		Minutes ▾	
Chris May	Attended Virtually ▾	Club Representative ▾	Brisbane Roar FRG



## MEETING NOTES

Tuesday 26 March, 2024

Meeting commences with NG (APL) welcoming the FRG and thanks all for joining.

### Topic 1: APL & FRG ways of working

NG (APL) invites FRG to provide feedback on opportunities to enhance the APL & FRG process and to use meeting times more effectively.

- FRG raised concerns and shared feedback on how meetings are minuted, which APL aims to resolve by combining FRG & APL notes to form official meeting minutes.
- JM (APL) informs FRG members had been added to APL comms distribution list as a way to improve transparency and equipping members with information as it occurs and as it is published.
- MM (MCY) informs APL the FRG requires clarity on terms of reference, duration of terms, and structure of the FRG, along with the need for signed terms of reference by all.
  - JM (APL) explains that not all clubs had structures in place, which Chris (BRI) requested a baseline structure from the APL so clubs can reference, EM (CCM) requesting clarification on the role of the FRG.
  - MB (MVC) expresses Melbourne Victory is a members working group, and, thus, would not want to shift from the existing members make up model.
- Agenda requires longer lead times, which JM explained the current process requires all club FRG minutes / queries to be shared with APL before an agenda is distributed. FRG prefers to align on topics together, to then bring forward to APL. Action point taken by APL.

### ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- APL & FRG to combine meeting notes to form official meeting minutes.

# LEAGUES

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- FRG to confirm who among its representatives will draft a standard set of club FRG ways of working that FRG chairs can take to clubs for consideration.
- APL will take on feedback and review the process and structure of the APL & FRG collaboration, including roles, agendas, and communication.
- APL to move to a formal agenda and ensure club discussion points are visible to all, with longer lead times factored into the distribution of the meeting agenda.

## Topic 2: Fan Safety

- APL addresses recent incidents involving active fans and has worked with every club to address individual issues.
- HL (APL) addresses the topic of fan safety and explains the APL's role in conflict resolution, explaining that each issue is often unique to the club and environment, and shares challenges in operations, such as mandating one policy that applies to all jurisdictions, public & private organisations, policing sectors. APL is working towards a consistent approach to policies trialing within one city with the aim to roll out broadly.
- HL (APL) walks through the roles that the APL, FA, a Venue Operator and Police have in enforcing fan behaviours and bans, and how they vary by key responsibility.
  - APL sets standards for fan behaviours across the game.
  - FA mandates codes of conduct for all spectators of football across all levels.
  - Venues set their own conditions of entry for all patrons of all sports.
  - Police also have the authority, particularly in licensed venues to remove patrons for unruly behaviour.
- APL shares that FA has approached APL about starting a game-wide security taskforce and asked to provide input into key representatives. The taskforce would aim to educate policy makers and enforcers of the uniqueness of football and football fandom, which needs to be embraced and treated differently, meanwhile all are required to follow rules and laws.

# LEAGUES

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- HL (APL) seeks support of the group to use them as a sounding board for feedback into this taskforce and to help provide feedback on the initiatives the taskforce identifies.
- FRG is supportive of being a sounding board for the taskforce. FRG also aligned to involve active fans as a secondary soundbound.
- JA (ADE) provides Adelaide United and Melbourne Victory as a good example of security taskforce.
- MM (MCY) expresses that fans have not had an opportunity to appeal bans and recommended the APL explains its involvement, policies and appeals processes to help educate fans on APL's position in these matters. HL confirms this is a priority for this off-season so they are in place ahead of next season.
- KC (MCY) offers support with the security taskforce given background in public safety at major events.

ACTION / NEXT STEPS: HL to confirm with FA intent to use FRG and Active Fans as sounding board for Security Taskforce, and to provide update on progress of implementation at next meeting.

## Topic 3: Referees and VAR

- HL (APL) opens the topic with insight into the process between APL and FA as it pertains to how referees are employed and engaged between both parties.
- APL is testing in-stadia comms for the Isuzu UTE A-League Finals Series giving fans opportunity to VAR decision commentary from the referees, similar to the implementation of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.
- HL opens the floor to the FRG to share thoughts from a fan's perspective.
  - FRG is supportive of on-field ref comms to help educate fans.
  - Does not believe there is a fundamental problem with VAR as long as the decision can be explained.
  - DM (MAC) points out that decisions are made that impact the game, decisions that don't go to VAR, and inconsistencies in referee decisions.

# LEAGUES

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- KC (MCY) recommends referee decisions are explained to help educate younger fans, news fans of football, and grassroots referees, and help to reduce online abuse.
- HL confirms after the roll out that APL would seek support for the FRG to distribute a post-season survey which would help in understanding if the implementation of referee comms helps with understanding decisions.
- FRG questions whether the VAR is needed to be implemented in the Liberty A-League.
- EM (CCM) is supportive of the women's league in its purest football form in terms of referee decisions being final and suggests implementation of better comms at games for fan engagement and education.
- DH (WUN) enjoys watching the women's league as there are fewer disruptions (e.g fans can celebrate goals), and shares opinion on VAR being used too much.
- APL acknowledges this request but laid out that there are many strategic investments required across the women's game to professionalise the game and decision on implementing VAR ahead of other priorities with limited resources needs to be assessed.
- MB (MVC) requests that the FRG is involved in the process.

## ACTION / NEXT STEPS:

- Post-season survey to be shared to all fan groups to be led by FRG representatives, which would help in understanding if the implementation of referee comms helps understanding.

## **Topic 4: Any other business**

- Double Headers:
  - EM (CCM) raises concerns over minimal double headers, which allow fans to access two matches.
  - HL (APL) explains the process is dependent each club's preference (from fans and players) as well as availability and appetite of each venue to host double headers and financial viability to do so, and clubs have differing individual

# LEAGUES

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preferences. APL confirmed that CCM is committed to schedule women and men at the same stadium. Scheduling may not always align with away games, among other factors.

## ACTION / NEXT STEPS:

- Group agrees this is a good discussion for FRG to take to clubs.
- MB (MVC) suggests fan surveys to understand fan views on fixtures, which EM (CCM) is open to.
- Newcastle and Canberra
  - APL does not control the Newcastle sale, but has provided information to bidders.
  - Canberra expansion is held up, however, due to those discussions being commercial in confidence APL is unable to disclose specifics of these hold ups at this stage.
- All Stars campaign
  - Matt is very disappointed there was no clear window for an A-Leagues club member only pre-sale, which JM (APL) explains the event is owned and hosted by TEG, further explains APL's role versus TEG's role and rights to promotion.

## ACTION / NEXT STEPS:

- JM (APL) encourages the group to vote in the A-Leagues All Stars voting campaign.
- FRG is encouraged to help spread the word on the All Stars campaign among members and fans of clubs.

NG closes the meeting at 8 PM. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 25 June, 2024.

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