

A-LEAGUES FRG #5



[KEY MEETING INFORMATION]

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME (AEST/AEDT)	END TIME (AEST/AEDT)
25 Jun 2024	VIRTUAL (GOOGLE MEET)	6:00 PM	8:45PM

[ATTENDEE LIST / RESPONSIBILITY]

ATTENDEES REQUESTED	ATTENDANCE	ROLE	REPRESENTATION
Nick Garcia	Attended Virtually	Meeting Chair	APL
Hannah Lidster	Attended Virtually	APL Representative	APL
Maggie Isaac	Apologies	APL Representative	APL
Chris Davis	Attended Virtually	APL Representative Minutes	APL
Ned Negus	Attended Virtually	APL Representative	APL
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

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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
Chris May	Apologies ▾	Club Representative ▾	Brisbane Roar FRG

A-LEAGUES FRG MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 25 June, 2025 6-9 PM AEST

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

Topic 1: New Documentation/Management Process

- HL (APL) outlines that we have distributed logins to a new online tool that will house all meeting minutes for clubs, agendas and provides additional functionality for both parties to collaborate on documents and use live chat function for ease of administration.
- HL advises that training will be provided over the coming weeks so all parties are comfortable using the tool.

Topic 2: Terms of Reference - Discussion & Agreement

- HL (APL) opens by stating that she understands that the FRG are working on revised Terms of Reference for the APL FRG ongoing and asks for progress updates.
- Group agrees on the importance that the FRG drives these terms and not APL, and as such the group agrees to better review and revert back to APL with updates by Friday 5 July.
- HL (APL) notes that as we are coming to the close of the first season of FRG, we need to set a new meeting cadence for next season.
- MB (MVC) notes the importance of scheduling these in windows that feed into important decision making times for APL.
- JA (ADL) suggests that outside of the normal cadence of meetings should there be relevant sub-topics we should look to schedule these ad-hoc (Grand Final match feedback is an example).
- HL notes the feedback above and suggests the following regular cadence
 - Before the A-League season launches (early-September)

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- After season launch & before Unite Round (early-November)
- Before the A-Leagues Finals Series (February)
- At the end of the A-Leagues Season (June)
- HL (APL) opens a discussion about the FSAA following their town hall the week prior and asks if there is an opportunity to better integrate their activities with that of the FRG
- KH (PER) states that this group is to specifically represent fans of clubs, FSAA is about general football fan matters that stretch across the whole game. KA suggests that given their broad remit, it is best that APL keeps engagement with both bodies separately as they serve different purposes.
- MM (MCY) suggests that the FRG could look to provide an invitation at only selected meetings to a representative of the FSAA and equally it may be worthwhile APL to have a tie in formally with FSAA. MM also notes that the wider football fan stakeholder is largely not aware of FRG, how it functions and what it achieves.
- A group discussion begins on the merits of tighter and formal engagement or not, with the consensus that for now both groups should be kept separate.
- NG (APL) states that he will shortly meet with the FSAA committee and will have a similar conversation and can report back to the group.

Topic 3: A-Leagues Season 2024/25 & Unite Round Plans

- HL (APL) opens with an explanation of how both competitions will work in structure for 2024/25 Season, with particular focus on the implications of a 13 team competition in ALM. HL walks through how byes will be required and how adding those additional rounds in has implications on playing some mid-week rounds.
- HL (APL) provides a list of key items in relation to Unite Round that have been identified as a result of fan feedback from last season and have been addressed for next season, including: change to November timing to avoid school holiday travel costs, a move to using only two venues instead of three and creating a clear men's and women's hub, an early announcement of the fixture to allow 4-5 months planning time for traveling fans, embedding marquee matchups into both venues to maximise

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attendance for club fans and neutrals, ensuring no club has a ALM and ALW game on the same day so club fans can attend both matches, an improved central fan site/activation area, and finally that 2024/25 Season members will be provided complimentary access to Unite Round through a ticket redemption mechanism.

- HL (APL) opens to the group for feedback.
- The group enters into discussion about the improvements and generally suggests that these changes should be positively received by the majority of fans.
- MB (APL) suggests that ensuring there is a distinctly different fan experience between the men's and women's hub is important
- YH (SYD) asks if the recent announcement about development work at Leichhardt Oval has been factored into plans. HL (APL) confirms that there is no effect to 2024/25 Season plans but it may affect future years should Unite Round remain in Sydney.

Topic 4: A-Leagues 2023/24 End of Season Survey Initial Findings

- HL (APL) presented some topline statistics from the Fan End of Season Survey. The statistics presented covered off average attendance to home and away matches, consumption of A-Leagues content and use of digital sites, current fan perception of the Isuzu UTE A-League Men and Liberty A-League Women on field product and the types of players fans like to watch, and some initial data to support intent to attend Unite Round.
- HL (APL) notes in particular the average attendance of games across the Isuzu UTE A-League Men season is in slight decline year on year. HL asks the FRG if they have any further insight into what might be driving the lower member and fan average match attendance statistics.
- MB (MVC) notes a better litmus test would be to deep dive into differences between the Isuzu UTE A-League Men and Liberty A-League Women attendance and what type of membership / ticket access they hold.
- MM (MCY) suggests there is general dissolution by the league, in particular in that traditional A-Leagues fan profile of middle aged men. MM also suggests that scheduling of games has an impact on families in particular which might be driving the trend. MM poses the question that kids can be a key re-engagement initiative for this demographic.
- KC (MC) poses that NPL/Grassroots match timing could also be impacting on show rates at the latter end of the season.

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- LW (NEW) suggests that looking at it differently can also help solve the problem. For instance, using what worked really well in the Liberty A-League Women this season as a model that can be replicated (kids on field at end of game, general player engagement with fans post-match).
- EM (CCM) adds that ensuring APL continues to listen to fans wants and needs is important to drive a positive behavioral change and used the example of the Grand Final stadium decision and inclusion of extra seats has been received well and builds positive sentiment.

Topic 6: Broadcast Partnership & APL Club Funding

- FRG presubmitted an agenda item that seeks a better understanding on the recent media reports on the broadcast production deal, and what flow on effects it will have to clubs and fans.
- NG (APL) confirms that APL is going through a process to appoint a new broadcast production partner after the Global Advance issue at the end of last season. NG notes the key is to find a model that continues to serve fans needs, but drives efficiency in spending in the right area. NG also notes that there is a go-to-market strategy in place that is trying to drive the best outcome to enable as much cost savings as possible to enable a better net result on our broadcast funds, which flow through to clubs.
- NN (APL) notes that it's important APL gets the balance right in not reducing specifications of broadcast so that it does not affect the fan viewing experience, and there is a focus on reducing wastage and right-sizing production to each game as appropriate.
- NG (APL) provides an overview of the broadcast commercial deal and how important it is that APL, its clubs and fans continue to support our broadcast partner to increase the game's reach and continue to drive the best financial outcomes for the league and its clubs into the future.
- FRG has a follow up question about how this relates to impacts on clubs and what steps will be taken to support clubs that are impacted due to funding reduction.
- NG (APL) notes it is a live commercial in confidence discussion being had at board level and that a club grant distribution has not yet been set so cannot provide any further information at this stage on where it will land. NG notes that a re-alignment does

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need to occur so that there is a better alignment between the net broadcast receipts, the grants given to clubs, and how the salary cap is structure ongoing to better align with global best practice, and that there will need to be a natural right-sizing to achieve this. NG notes that APL is already in discussions with clubs about how APL can provide assistance once the outcome is determined.

Topic 7: Perception of the A-Leagues

- FRG pre-submitted an agenda item that seeks to understand how APL will address the lack of positive narrative around the A Leagues. FRG also seeks to understand what methods are being used to extend our reach into broader media and news channels.
- NG (APL) states it's an ongoing challenge which APL needs to address, however over the past three months, and in particular off the back of the focus on our football product and a strong finals series some of that narrative started to change. NG states that the focus now turns to refining, in partnership with APL's clubs what the strategic core focuses and vision for the future is, and that AP intends to release this plan publicly ahead of next season to establish trust in the direction of the league.
- DM (MFC) states that a big consideration should be how APL works with football-friendly journalists to help push our narrative beyond our owned channels. NG notes that its very difficult to cut through into media channels that actively support our competitor codes and we need to work closely with our allies to help.
- EM (CCM) suggests that the FRG can also be a tool to help build trust and connect with league's fans and build credibility and that celebrating the successes of the first year of the FRG could also help change the narrative about APL and what the A-Leagues stands for.
- DM (MFC) asks where Channel 10 can play a role in this, and where they might be seeking to assist by way of magazine shows/ shoulder content to help drive A-Leagues news and conversation.
- NN (APL) recalls that Channel 10 did a highlights style show in year 1 but due to a range of cost and engagement factors did not see a return on investment. NN confirmed that there is a new broadcast arrangement for Season 2024/25 with a focus on owning Saturday's and this will have a natural positive effect on shoulder programming.

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Any Other Business

- DM (MAC) asks if there is an update from the last meeting on the standup of the fan taskforce.
- HL (APL) confirms that all feedback from the last session has been provided to Football Australia and APL is awaiting guidance on timeline and next steps for its start.
- MB (MVC) and MM (MCY) suggest that APL needs to update the FRG page on its website so that it better reflects the purpose, the Chairs involved and how the broader fanbase can provide feedback into their club representation for better understanding on the groups progression. HL notes this will be an action item from this meeting.

Meeting closing

- HL notes that Maggie will be in touch to schedule the next meeting for September and thanks everyone for their attendance.