

A-LEAGUES FRG #9

[KEY MEETING INFORMATION]

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
25 Mar 2025	VIRTUAL (GOOGLE MEET)	6:00 PM	8:20PM

[ATTENDEE LIST / RESPONSIBILITY]

ATTENDEES REQUESTED	ATTENDANCE	ROLE	REPRESENTATION
Stephen Conroy	Attended	Meeting Chair	APL
Hannah Lidster	Attended	APL Representative	APL
Chris Botherway	Attended	APL Representative Minutes	APL
Kate Green	Attended	APL Representative	APL
Tony Henderson	Attended	APL Representative	APL
Paul Meltz	Absent	APL Representative	
Megan Scott (For Joe Aylward)	Attended	Club Representative	Adelaide United FRG
David Morgan	Attended	Club Representative	Macarthur Bulls FRG

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Susan Baikie	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Wellington Phoenix FRG
Ben Archer (for Emma Beletich)	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Newcastle Jets FRG
Yousef Hussain	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Sydney FC FRG
Maria Berry	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne Victory FRG
Kathleen Crawford	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne City FRG
Harry Inns	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	WSW FRG
Erin Morrow	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Central Coast Mariners FRG
Kim Hawkins	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Perth Glory FRG
Matt Mann	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne City FRG
Daniel Hoogstra	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Western United FRG
Chris May	Absent ▾	Club Representative ▾	Brisbane Roar FRG
Tim Adams	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Auckland FC FRG

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[AGENDA]

Introduction

- a. HL (APL) welcomes all on the call
- b. Notes that there are two stand-in Chairs for the meeting BA for EA at NEW, and MS for JA at ADL).
- c. Agenda run-through

Action Items from last meeting(s)

- a. HL (APL) provides updates from the last informal meeting held including:
 - i. APL has plans to roll-out two forms of content pieces in relation to refereeing transparency across the finals series: educational content based on better understanding rules, and an analysis of certain rulings from Jon Moss at FA
 - ii. APL has sought understanding from broadcaster around feeds provided into big screens for all club matches off the back of fans wanting the same level of replay in stadium to that provided to fans at-home. APL will complete audit across all clubs to determine which clubs are over-riding with manual feeds or decisions and determine guidelines for clubs for next season.

FRG Agenda Item 1: APL Management Structure & Planning

- HL (APL) introduces SC new Executive Chair at APL to the group.
- SC (APL) begins by thanking FRG members for their time and efforts since the inception of the A-League FRG
- SC clarifies areas of focus for his interim time in the role including:
 - Administration matters to remain out of media, with a strong focus on on-field results - including the bright future of our youth systems and talent, and an exciting upcoming finals series

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- Board focus is on the restoration of financial stability of the league and the clubs - which has already included many tough decisions impacting good people and staffing levels at both league and clubs, and the decline in central distributions
- This will include a review of financial and regulatory matters over the coming months that help clubs thrive and drive sustainability.
- DM (MAC) asks what fans can expect from SC in his new role
- SC lists key personal focuses as mostly BAU, finalising a few key projects, and recruiting a new CEO, whilst focusing on a new broadcast deal for the A-Leagues with the current deal to expire at the end of next season, and also a re-build of a stronger relationship with Football Australia, connecting the pyramid.

FRG Agenda Item 2: FRG Chair Changeover Plan

- HL (APL) opens the floor to discuss the success of Club FRG and A-League FRG to date and how the renewal of Chairs should best occur so that momentum built to date is not lost.
- KC (MCY), BA (NEW) state that their Club FRG work on a 2 year term for appointment. MC (MVC) states that their FRG existed prior to this structure so is less formalised. Most other Chairs agree that with the exception of staff turnover at club level, the club level FRG's work well for club based issues.
- Discussion ensues and many Chairs agree that between Club and League FRG, it can be a lot to handle and manage for one person. EM (CCM) states that appointment of Co-Chairs could be helpful to manage. Some Chairs raise that they will need to switch out at end of season due to capacity.
- DM (MAC) questions how we can get the best structure to ensure productivity is not lost and people who are committed remain in. Discussion turns to the need to have Chairs forced to turn over.
- HL (APL) plays back that the consensus appears to be that all Clubs will rotate out seats as per their own TOR, but ultimately the representative appointed to the League FRG, should be voted for by their own Club FRG and if they are happy to have the same representative for an extended time period nominated to the A-League FRG, APL should not stipulate a maximum term. HL asks

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the group to confirm any counter view to this. No Chair objects and no members of APL staff object and this is taken as the process going forward.

- HL (APL) confirms that the next meeting will be the last of the season, and for those clubs that will have a rotation in representative will be asked to have both representatives attend for a smooth handover.
- MB (MVC) raises that it is important that APL works with clubs at club level and at a League level to ensure diversity is across all club and league groups so that all fan voices are heard. HL (APL) agrees that in the off-season a renewal of initial TOR and guidelines provided to clubs needs to be re-issued to manage changeover of club staff and IP lost.

FRG Agenda Item 3: FA Fan & Security Taskforce

- HL (APL) confirms that APL has taken note of the many great ideas provided in the informal meeting held on this topic and that they have been collated to take forward into the FA Taskforce.
- She also confirms that there has been changeover at FA which has slowed down its progress but there appears to be positive steps to commence it soon. She confirms that APL commits to the group that if it doesn't stand up by the end of the season, APL will take steps to move forward initiatives where it can on its own, but it would be better if led by the governing body.

APL Agenda Item 1: A-Leagues Merchandising & Retail

- KG (APL) advises the group that she is in the process of seeking feedback from all key stakeholders to improve the access, quality and sales of club kits at retail for fans. APL has surveyed key suppliers and retailers, and would like to seek a fan perspective on a few key topics before a broader fan survey is sent over the coming weeks.
 - a. KG asks questions about their habits on retailer selection & experience
 - i. MB (MVC) states that women's kit accessibility is a continued problem. KC (MCY) agrees.

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- ii. BA (NEW) confirms that there is nowhere he is aware of within an 1hr of where he lives that sells A-League merchandise. He also notes there is no access in retailers like Big W, Best & Less and Kmart like he has seen in past seasons
- iii. EM (CCM) tells the group that as the reigning Champions he believes access to purchase his club jerseys is horrendous and doesn't know anywhere that sells them on the Central Coast other than the club, which often has stock issues. EM questions how fans can help shape these decisions and what the League is doing to ensure Clubs and fans are best serviced by suppliers.
- iv. Various statements are added to the group chat including:
 - 1. General sentiment that jerseys/ merch should be available in retailers other than the Club
 - 2. Need for cheaper merchandise at retailers more accessible to fans, with mass retailers
- b. KG questions if Kit Brand is important to them in their purchase decision
 - i. The group all input varying brands that they believe are less than perfect due to previous experience in lack of consistent sizing, 'cookie cutter designs' or unappealing apparel or sponsorship logos.
 - ii. Product quality of PUMA, New Balance and adidas were brands most respected.
 - iii. It was noted that often the difference in quality between a global brand's European Club product and Australian Club product can be disappointing
 - iv. Brand not necessarily the driver but the need and the ability for the supplier to create/ facilitate great design as opposed to template offer
- c. KG asks what types of preferences they have on jersey designs and customisation of logo placements between clubs
 - i. Various statements are added to the group chat including:
 - 1. Sponsor logos have a major impact on the design of a jerseys. Potential for fans to have the ability to choose if they want sponsors on jerseys or not.
 - 2. Design is really key to fan demand
 - 3. Clean over cluttered offers ability to be more aesthetically pleasing and remain on Club brand

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4. Classic vs dull is a tricky balance / subtle details to 'lift the classic'
 5. Baggy shorts & 1980s shorts are not welcome back
- d. KG thanks the group for their time and confirms a broader fan survey will go out soon and she would appreciate the help of the FRG to seek broader input and feedback.

APL Agenda Item 2: Dolan Warren Awards

- e. TH (APL) addresses the group acknowledging the mostly negative feedback received at how the Dolan Warren awards were run last season. He confirms that due to financial constraints, the APL is not able yet to return to a large-scale formal awards ceremony and that up to 6 different options have been explored.
- f. TH confirms there are two viable options left for decision and seeks input from the group on what they think is preferable:
 - i. Option 1: Small Event held on the eve of Grand Final at the Grand Final venue where award winners are presented with awards at a semi informal cocktail event
 - ii. Option 2: APL produces a broadcast-standard awards ceremony for distribution on A-League Channels.
- g. MB (MVC) asks if the broadcast option would include a live audience so that fans can be involved. TH responded that it is a consideration, but costs, studio availability and show direction are key factors that will determine if this is possible or not.
- h. MB (MVC) states the importance of women's football and that the history is not lost, important the DWA keeps this understanding and memory alive.
- i. KC (MCY) states preference of option two with the following caveats: need to consider the athletes and how they can celebrate their achievements with their families, the value of doing a live show versus a pre-record (noting that other examples of live shows have been clunky and pose risk), and that she would hate to see players all 'zooming in' to accept awards and that physical presence is important. The group broadly agrees with all of these recommendations.

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- j. EM (CCM) questions if it is the intent that APL does eventually return to a standardised format, to which HL responds that would be the ideal scenario if finances permit in the future.

Any Other Business

- None

Close - Hannah

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 10 June, 2025, HL suggests day of week movement to Wednesday 11 June to help Chairs manage varying grassroots commitments now season has started.