

A-LEAGUES FRG #14

[KEY MEETING INFORMATION]

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
5 May 2026	VIRTUAL (GOOGLE MEET)	6:00 PM	8:00PM

[ATTENDEE LIST / RESPONSIBILITY]

ATTENDEES REQUESTED	ATTENDANCE	ROLE	REPRESENTATION
Steve Rosich	Attended ▾	APL Representative ▾	APL
Hannah Lidster	Attended ▾	APL Representative ▾	APL
Natalie Matthews	Attended ▾	APL Representative ▾ Minutes ▾	APL
Chris Botherway	Attended ▾	APL Representative ▾	APL
Tony Henderson	Attended ▾	APL Representative ▾	APL
Brad Millner	Attended ▾	APL Representative ▾	APL
Patrick Clancy	Attended ▾	FSAA representative ▾	
Tim Adams	Apologies ▾	Club Representative ▾	Auckland FC FRG
Joe Aylward / Georgie	Apologies ▾	Club Representative ▾	Adelaide United FRG

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Bouhalis			
Chris Kelly	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Brisbane Roar FRG
Erin Morrow	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Central Coast Mariners FRG
RJ Bonaccorsi	Apologies ▾	Club Representative ▾	Macarthur FC FRG
Kathleen Crawford / Matt Mann	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne City FRG
Charlie Bell	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Melbourne Victory FRG
Emma Beletich	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Newcastle Jets FRG
Kim Hawkins / Jarod Rowe	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Perth Glory FRG
Yousef Housain	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Sydney FC FRG
Ethan Fransen	Absent ▾	Club Representative ▾	Wellington Phoenix FRG
Harry Inns / Josh Inns	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Western Sydney Wanderers FRG
Daniel Hoogstra	Attended ▾	Club Representative ▾	Western United FRG

[AGENDA]

Introduction (5 minutes) - Hannah

- a. Welcome all
- b. Apologies for this meeting (if any)
- c. Agenda run-through

APL Agenda Item 1: General Updates - Steve Rosich

- SR outlined several key strategic goals for the A-Leagues. Legal documentation is currently being finalized with the preferred investment partner following a commercial agreement. A formal update is expected during May.
- Updates regarding the Canberra Ninja A-League license were provided after Capital Football's exit. The APL is in active talks with prospective owners from the Central Coast sale process, reviewing bids for both the women's team and future men's expansion. The APL Board will review these options throughout May.
- Western United remains a priority, specifically regarding their stadium status, finances, and governance. The APL anticipates a clearer picture of their 2026/27 readiness by month's end.
- Despite these ownership discussions, the 2026/27 season planning including the fixture list and competition structure is proceeding as per the timeline.

Domestic Media Rights

- SR shared that exclusive talks continue with the preferred broadcast partner regarding Australian media rights.
- The chosen bid was prioritized due to its superior free-to-air reach and enhanced promotional support compared to other offers.
- Ongoing work covers production, commercial terms, and how the rights will be marketed, with an announcement slated for May.
- SR noted that FRG members would receive a briefing prior to the public release where possible.

APL & FRG Agenda Item 2: Finals Series - Hannah Lidster / Tony Henderson

Initial queries / concerns on finals series ticketing (FRG)

- HL (APL) provided an overview of the planning undertaken for the 2025/26 Finals Series, including consultation with clubs, ticketing providers and stakeholders. Analysis of previous finals campaigns, member purchasing behaviour and pricing benchmarks informed several changes to the Finals Series ticketing approach, with the objective of balancing member benefits while maximising the available public on-sale window.
- HL (APL) outlined the revised member ticketing process, replacing the previous same-seat reservation period with a priority access model. Ticketed members received an exclusive on-sale window with a 20% discount, followed by non-ticketed members before tickets were released to the general public.
- Provided feedback on the revised process, raising concerns regarding the shortened member discount window, inconsistent delivery of member communications and discount codes, and challenges experienced by some supporters when accessing tickets.
- Discussion also focused on accessibility, with FRG members highlighting the importance of maintaining accessible seating options, accommodating away supporters with accessibility requirements and ensuring venue layouts support all supporters during Finals Series matches.
- Additional feedback was provided regarding active supporter areas, family seating and venue-specific operational considerations, with members noting the importance of recognising each club's unique supporter culture while balancing the needs of different supporter groups.
- HL (APL) acknowledged several operational learnings from the opening weeks of the Finals Series, including ticketing platform configuration issues and communication improvements, confirming that adjustments had already been made where possible for upcoming matches.

Grand Final Plans - ALW & ALM

- HL (APL) and TH (APL) presented an overview of planning for both the Ninja A-League Women and Isuzu UTE A-League Men Grand Finals, including venue scenarios, operational planning and fan engagement initiatives.
- Venue planning has been completed across all potential Grand Final hosting scenarios, with planning considering stadium availability, broadcast requirements, operational readiness and supporter experience.
- TH (APL) outlined plans to further enhance the Grand Final experience through improved precinct activations, grassroots football engagement, family entertainment, supporter activations, enhanced match presentation and premium ceremonial elements.
- Planning for the Ninja A-League Women Grand Final includes integration with Female Football Week, community football initiatives and family-focused activations to strengthen the connection between grassroots football and the League.
- Planning for the Isuzu UTE A-League Men Grand Final will build on previous seasons through an expanded pre-match presentation, enhanced supporter storytelling, improved entertainment and continued investment in presentation and trophy ceremonies.
- HL (APL) confirmed the Grand Final ticket on-sale process will follow the same member priority and discount model implemented throughout the Finals Series.

APL & Agenda Item 3: Fixture & Broader Initiatives for 2026/27 Season - Hannah Lidster & Chris Botherway

Fixture Plans

- HL (APL) presented an overview of the proposed 2026/27 season structure, including key competition dates and fixture planning principles. The Men's and Women's seasons are proposed to commence on the weekend of 16–18 October, with the Men's Grand Final scheduled for early June to accommodate the international football calendar.

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- HL (APL) advised that the fixture has been developed with a focus on maximising attendance, broadcast audiences and commercial outcomes, while balancing club requests, venue availability, travel requirements and AFC commitments.
- APL confirmed its objective to minimise midweek fixtures wherever possible, with the exception of scheduling requirements arising from AFC competitions. It was also noted that the Men's competition will continue through the AFC Asian Cup period due to scheduling constraints.
- The Women's Finals Series will return to a single-leg semi-final format for the 2026/27 season to accommodate FIFA international windows while maintaining the overall competition calendar.
- APL reiterated its intention to release the Men's fixture by the end of June, with the Women's fixture to follow once venue and double-header planning has been completed.
- FRG members discussed the challenges associated with balancing the domestic calendar against international football commitments, noting the importance of maintaining player availability while continuing to prioritise fan attendance, venue availability and broadcast outcomes.

Celebration Rounds

- HL (APL) presented early planning for a series of league-wide celebration rounds designed to strengthen supporter engagement and create identifiable moments throughout the season.
- Grassroots Round was presented as the leading concept, with the objective of celebrating community football, strengthening connections between professional clubs and local participants, and encouraging greater engagement with grassroots clubs across Australia and New Zealand.
- Discussion broadly supported the introduction of a Grassroots Round and discussed opportunities to better connect current players with community clubs through storytelling, local activations and participant engagement.
- Suggested future consideration of Indigenous, multicultural, heritage and charity-themed rounds. It was acknowledged that any future Indigenous Round would require extensive consultation and long-term planning to ensure it is delivered authentically and respectfully.

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- APL noted the importance of identifying celebration rounds that are uniquely representative of the A-Leagues while ensuring they can be consistently delivered across all clubs.

Family Promo Ticket Concept

- CB (APL) presented a proposed league-wide family ticket initiative designed to improve accessibility, attract new audiences and strengthen the pathway from grassroots participation to A-League attendance.
- Two concepts were presented for discussion, including a limited allocation of entry-level family-priced tickets available at every match and the introduction of designated family seating areas that provide a welcoming match-day experience supported by entertainment, activations and commercial partnerships.

FA Participant Data

- CB (APL) discussed the ongoing opportunity to better connect Football Australia participant data with A-League fan acquisition strategies as part of the League's broader growth plans.
- APL reiterated that increasing engagement with football participants and young families remains a strategic priority for the 2026/27 season, with initiatives designed to encourage first-time attendance and convert participants into long-term supporters

Any Other Business - All

- TH (APL) advised that invitations for the Dolan Warren Awards would be distributed shortly and encouraged FRG members to attend as part of the studio audience.
- HL (APL) encouraged FRG members to continue providing feedback throughout the remainder of the Finals Series, particularly where operational issues arise, so that improvements can be made in real time where possible.

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Close - Hannah Lidster

- a. Next meeting will be held on Thursday 4th June, 2026