

FOOTBALL QUEENSLAND

2024 - 2026 INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY



FOOTBALL
QUEENSLAND

WHAT WE VALUE



For the game and everyone involved

- We value all participants and stakeholders and treat them well
- We welcome and accept everyone
- We acknowledge and are grateful for all contributors



We're proud of football and of everything we do

- We work for the good of the game and put the 'bigger picture' first
- We celebrate and communicate our successes
- We embrace our history and our diversity, always looking forward



The non-negotiable foundation for how we conduct ourselves

- We act and communicate honestly and with transparency
- We are accountable and embrace feedback
- We tackle problems head on – 'no sweeping under the carpet'



We are united, working together for football

- We engage, collaborate, co-operate and share
- We work as one team, representing one game
- We work towards common goals



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Acknowledgement of Country

Football Queensland acknowledges the First Nations people whose lands we play on. We embrace the Traditional Owners' continued cultural and spiritual connection to Country and pay respect to their ancestors and descendants who continue to inspire us.



PURPOSE

This strategy document outlines the primary strategic infrastructure objectives for Football Queensland from 2024 to 2026. It identifies the drivers, enablers, and levers that will be utilised to achieve the sport’s strategic vision for football infrastructure.

VISION

Football in Queensland is experiencing significant year-on-year growth, presenting both challenges and opportunities, particularly in the wake of hosting the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023 (FWWC23) and Australia and Queensland once again hosting teams at the AFC Women’s Asian Cup (AFC26) in 2026. These challenges and opportunities span the entire ecosystem, from community football to elite levels. The sport’s strength can only be realised through a holistic vision and a comprehensive strategy that brings this vision to life.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Approach

Football infrastructure relies heavily on government investment. Therefore, this strategy will guide Football Queensland’s operational activities, positioning the organisation and the sport to collaborate effectively with all tiers of government to secure necessary infrastructure investment over the next three years.

Objectives



Clear Objectives and Unified Approach

It is vital for Football Queensland to be clear in its objectives and unified in its approach when engaging with funding partners. This unified front will help secure the level of investment required to meet infrastructure demands.



Industry Expertise and Business Intelligence

By investing in industry expertise and deploying advanced business intelligence tools such as the National Football Facilities Audit Tool, Football Queensland is well-equipped to drive informed advocacy. This approach will foster a deeper understanding of the infrastructure ecosystem and its needs.

Football Queensland will leverage this strategy to shape and inform its operational activities, ensuring that the organisation and the sport can work seamlessly with government partners. This collaboration is crucial to securing infrastructure investment and unlocking the legacy benefits of hosting the FWWC23.

The challenges are significant, but with a clear, unified strategy and informed advocacy, Football Queensland is better positioned than ever to drive infrastructure investment. This strategy sets the foundation for realising the sport’s full potential across all levels, from grassroots to elite, ensuring sustainable growth and development of football infrastructure in Queensland.



UNLOCKING THE LEGACY OF FWWC23



Unlocking the Legacy of FWWC23

Achieving 50/50 participation parity is a strategic goal shared by both Football Australia and Football Queensland. The hosting of the FWWC23 served as a catalyst, providing Queensland with a unique opportunity to elevate women's sports in the region. The tournament shattered records, consistently filling Suncorp Stadium, surpassing economic projections, and inspiring a surge in female participation. However, accommodating this growth and that associated to the future hosting of AFC26, and realising the opportunity requires significant and continued effort.

To address the challenges Queensland may face post-FWWC23, Football Queensland, in collaboration with Football Australia, conducted quantitative analysis on community club infrastructure. The findings highlighted a need for hundreds of millions of dollars in community infrastructure investment in Queensland alone. This investment is crucial to overcoming systemic barriers to female participation, including accessibility, safety, capacity, and inclusiveness. Faced with this substantial figure, Football Queensland has intensified its engagement with all tiers of government, devising a strategy to maximise contributions from various sources to meet both current and future demands of the whole game.

Beyond community football, Queensland played a pivotal role in the success of the FWWC23 Matildas, showcasing talents like Captain Clare Polkinghorne, Mary Fowler, Katrina Gorry, and penalty heroine Cortnee Vine as examples. Sustaining this success hinges on nurturing future talents within Queensland football.

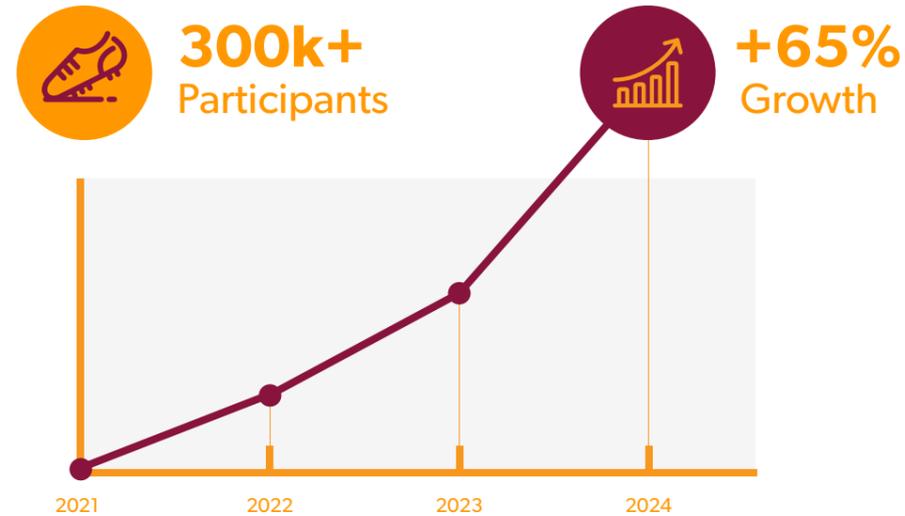
The establishment of a State Home of Community Football is imperative, offering benefits not only to state and national teams but also to the wider community and assisting with AFC26 team hosting requirements. This presents an opportune moment for the government to recognise football's value, spanning from community benefits to moments of national pride. In addition, investment in targeted stadium infrastructure can bolster the commercial viability of women's and smaller professional male football codes' activities enabling reinvestment in the game to occur as opposed to the current deficit model.

By securing targeted government funding and leveraging co-contribution initiatives, football, in collaboration with the government, can capitalise on the legacy of 2023 and deliver a successful AFC26 tournament. This collaborative effort can deliver societal benefits for all Queenslanders, ensuring the continued growth and success of football in the region.

The FWWC23 has provided a significant boost to women's football in Queensland. However, to maintain this momentum and achieve the goal of 50/50 participation parity, substantial investment in community infrastructure and targeted initiatives is required. Football Queensland, with the support of all tiers of government, is committed to addressing these challenges and ensuring the continued growth and success of football in the region.

CHALLENGES

The capacity and capability of community football infrastructure in Queensland is under significant pressure. With over 300,000 participants and a remarkable compound growth rate of 65% over the past four years, clubs and facilities are struggling to keep up with increasing demand. Football is the number one team participation sport in Queensland, and based on historical growth rates, the state's facilities are poised to face even greater challenges in the near future.



Current Infrastructure Challenges

Football Queensland has utilised the National Football Facilities Audit Tool to identify geographical service gaps and specific facility asset shortcomings. These deficiencies pose a significant threat to the growth of football post-FWWC23 and hinder clubs' ability to meet escalating demand. This impacts various aspects of Queensland's society, from physical and mental health to local economic vitality and youth crime rates. Addressing these infrastructure inadequacies is imperative, given the extensive benefits of community football.

How Our Infrastructure Challenges Impact the Community

- Physical Health Challenges**
- Mental Health Challenges**
- Economic Challenges**
- Youth Crime Challenges**

Comparative Investment and Growth

While other states invest in state football centres, Queensland, despite being Australia's second-largest football participant state, is lagging behind. Since 2016, there has been an astounding 470% increase in FQ talent pathway athletes, with female players alone seeing a 330% surge. The state body currently delivers high-performance programming for 15 youth state teams, 2 senior teams and 2,000 athletes across FQ Academy, FQ regional programs, clubs and the FQ Academy QAS.

With the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and AFC26 on the horizon, Football Queensland aims to sustain representation in national teams, notably the Matildas, where 50% of Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024, and FWWC23 squads hailed from Queensland. Specifically in reference to hosting AFC26 there also needs to be investment into high-performance training infrastructure. As FWWC23 demonstrated there is a significant gap in facilities that are at the level required to host international teams for training in Queensland.

+470%

INCREASE IN FQ TALENT PATHWAY ATHLETES

+330%

INCREASE IN FEMALE PARTICIPATION



Proposed State Home of Community Football



Need for Large-Scale Facilities

A large-scale game requires a large-scale project

As green spaces diminish and South East Queensland's population grows, the necessity for a large-scale rectangular field training facility becomes urgent to accommodate national and state events, which currently struggle to find suitable venues. This lack of facilities not only impedes football's efforts to support local communities through physical activity opportunities but also affects the overall well-being of these communities.

Community Impacts



Reduced Physical Activity



Increased Stress and Mental Health Issues



Limited Social Interaction



Environmental Impact



Economic Disadvantages



Lack of Opportunities

Impact on Professional Codes and Event Hosting

As the content composition at Suncorp Stadium continues to very appropriately evolve to unlock maximum economic returns for the state, its use as a venue for smaller capacity content will correspondingly decline as the economics and operational efficiencies don't stack up.

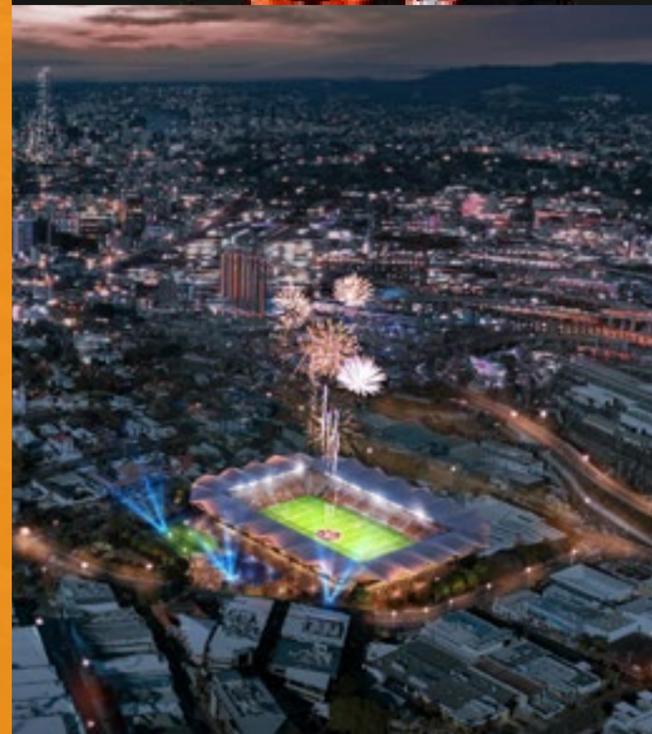
A Tier 2 stadium becomes a critical addition to the city's event makeup as will be required to accommodate the content departure from Suncorp Stadium as well as the large volume of content that does not have the commercial appeal to service the costs associated with a 52,500 seat stadium.

Integrating the use of infrastructure with incrementally increasing capacity will truly unlock economic success of sporting and entertainment content and deliver best for city outcomes. This can be enabled through the addition of a 15,000 seat stadium that sits under and helps content eventually make a leap to 52,500 seat stadiums as the commercials mature.

Without a Tier 2 stadium, women's professional codes will struggle to secure venues conducive to their growth, and smaller male professional codes face similar challenges in finding appropriate stadiums. Suncorp Stadium's recurring issues, such as access difficulties, playing surface conditions, and commercial constraints, pose ongoing challenges for codes seeking its use. For these codes to thrive and provide suitable facilities for both clubs and fans, there is a clear need for a Tier 2 stadium. Without it, the codes risk stunted growth in commercial activity and new teams, ultimately hampering Brisbane's capacity to host more events and attract greater economic activity to the region.

Conclusion

The growth and sustainability of community football in Queensland are at risk due to the current inadequacies in infrastructure. Significant investment and development of facilities are crucial to support the sport's expansion and its positive impact on society. Addressing these challenges will not only benefit football but also enhance the overall well-being and economic vitality of Queensland's communities.



OPPORTUNITIES

As the state's number one team participation sport, football offers far more than just athletic competition. With over 300,000 participants and engagement reaching more than 1 million Queenslanders, football and its facilities are an integral part of Queensland's society.



Benefits of Government Investment Health and Well-being

Government investment in community football facilities represents a high return on investment by indirectly influencing and improving the physical and mental health and well-being of Queenslanders. This positive impact extends from players to volunteers, contributing to a healthier and more active population.

Economic Impact

Football generates significant economic activity within local communities, supporting small businesses and creating employment opportunities within clubs. This economic contribution helps sustain local economies and fosters community development.

Social Impact

Football clubs play a crucial role in providing positive recreational opportunities, diverting energies away from youth crime and towards constructive pursuits. These clubs are the lifeblood of many Queensland communities, and by investing in their capacity and capability, the government enhances the overall health and well-being of participants and the broader community.



BRISBANE 2032 AND AFC26: A **GOLDEN** OPPORTUNITY



Showcasing Excellence

With Brisbane 2032 and AFC26 on the horizon, Queensland has a golden opportunity to showcase its excellence to the world. The state's robust football infrastructure design will not only engage Australians in this journey but also provide a valuable asset for the thousands of athletes descending on Brisbane for both tournaments.

Post-Games Legacy

Post-games/tournament, improved football infrastructure assets will bolster Brisbane's reputation as a premier warm-weather training destination for northern hemisphere sports. As an example, the proposed State Home of Community Football facility will be strategically located adjacent to key corridors of future land releases and population growth, catering to the needs of the state's top participation sport and other rectangular code sports, as well as the recreational needs of the growing community.

Supporting Emerging Sports

Additionally, the proposed stadium will offer a fit-for-purpose venue for emerging female sports codes. The proposed site in the Bowen Hills Priority Development Area (PDA) will drive urban renewal through increased economic activity in the surrounding area and act as a catalyst for further development interests.





Vision for an International Sports Capital Attracting Talent and Events

If Brisbane aspires to be recognised as an international sports capital, it must attract talent, teams, and fans. The proposed Tier 2 stadium aligns perfectly with Brisbane 2032 planning as a games-time venue for hockey, rugby or potentially flag football. Post-games, it will provide a facility that attracts new events, supports the commercial growth of smaller codes, enhances the fan experience, and allows Suncorp Stadium to host more lucrative events during the summer months.



Conclusion

Football is more than just a sport in Queensland;

It is a vital part of the community fabric. Government investment in football facilities yields significant returns in health, economic, and social benefits. With Brisbane 2032 on the horizon, strategic investment in football infrastructure will not only enhance the community but also position Brisbane as a leading international sports capital. By supporting football and its infrastructure, the government can ensure a lasting legacy of health, prosperity, and community cohesion for Queensland.

STRATEGY ON A PAGE

Our Vision

Football in Queensland United. The game of choice, for all, for life.




PRIORITY 1

State Home of Community Football

Estimated Cost: \$70 million




PRIORITY 2

Community Football Infrastructure Fund

\$60 million over three years




PRIORITY 3

Tier 2 Stadium

Estimated Cost: Up to \$200 million

Enablers → **Action Summary**

- 
Business Intelligence

Utilise football's qualitative and quantitative data to better inform strategic priorities and objectives
- 
Workforce Capability

Leverage Football Queensland's internal expertise to drive better outcomes for football across Queensland
- 
Mobilised Participant Base

Unite the state's number one team participant base to deliver the sports message to key decision makers
- 
Campaigns

Launch targeted campaigns that raise awareness, promote messaging and drive physical action in support of football
- 
Advocacy and Submissions

Through written and face-to-face interactions promote the football community's priorities to key decision makers
- 
Education

Educate key decision makers in order to assist them to make better informed decisions



DRIVERS

FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023™ Legacy

Following the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023™ (FWWC23), female football in Queensland has experienced unprecedented growth. In the lead-up to the tournament, participation increased by 60% between 2021 and 2023, surpassing 85,000 players, with significant additional growth anticipated in 2024. This rapid expansion has pushed clubs and facilities to their limits, and without new capacity and capability through infrastructure, the sport will struggle to meet current demand and future growth. Football Queensland is aligned with Football Australia’s IX Principles target of 50/50 participation parity by 2027, as outlined in the FWWC23 Legacy Plan and Football Queensland’s 2023–2026 Strategic Plan. To achieve this 50/50 target, a concerted effort is needed to improve both the capacity and capability to support female football in Queensland. Without these improvements, the gains made through hosting FWWC23 will be lost. Equally if a similar spike in participation is experienced post AFC26 then the sport needs to advocate for proactive investment as opposed to reactive action.

Queensland Representation

Queensland has supplied approximately 50% of the players for Australia’s Matildas squad in recent games (Olympics 2020, 24) and tournaments (FWWC23, etc.). While Queensland has historically had strong representation in national teams, this may become unsustainable as other states and territories continue to invest in their football centres. Football Queensland is experiencing significant growth in its Talent Pathway Programs, with a 468% increase from 2016 to 2022, including a 333% rise in female players alone. Current high-performance football facilities either do not meet the necessary requirements or lack sufficient space to

accommodate the program. This situation dilutes Football Queensland’s ability to meet the needs of all pathway teams in a timely manner and places significant stress on already stretched resources. To maintain its national competitiveness, supply talent to national teams, meet the needs of its state pathway program, and support other Pacific nations’ teams as a staging post/training facility, Queensland urgently needs a State Football Centre.

Community

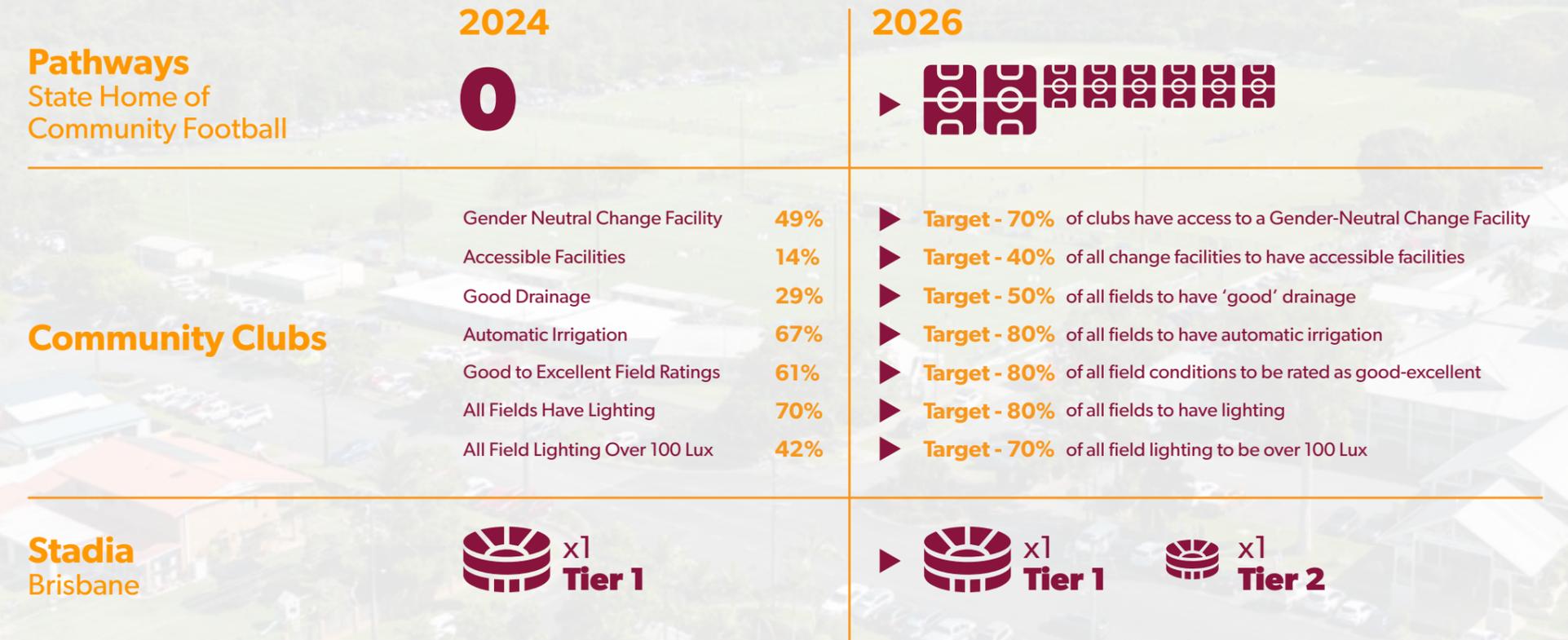
Football is Queensland’s number one participation sport, experiencing a remarkable surge in engagement. Over the past four years, football participation has grown by 65%, bringing the total number of participants to over 300,000 and involving 1 million Queenslanders directly or indirectly in the game. Despite this growth, current community football infrastructure falls short in terms of both capacity and capability. Queenslanders now expect and demand inclusive, human-centered design facilities. Clubs need to maximise the utilisation of their space through improved facility capabilities, such as adding lights to increase playing time on surfaces.

Commercial Viability

As the FWWC23 demonstrated, there is strong demand for football content in Queensland. However, the current stadium offerings in Brisbane present challenges on two fronts. Firstly, access: recent legislative changes have allowed Stadiums Queensland to focus on more lucrative hiring arrangements during the summer periods (A-League season). This has made access to Brisbane’s only rectangular stadium increasingly difficult, adversely impacting both accessibility and the quality of the surface. Secondly, utilising a 52,000-seater stadium for events that require 20,000 seats or fewer is cost-prohibitive and places significant financial stress on sports organisations looking to hire stadiums in Brisbane. This is a challenge not faced by sports in other major capitals, as Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth all have Tier 2 stadia. This issue also affects other rectangular codes in Brisbane and the burgeoning women’s leagues.

FOOTBALL INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT

Where we are | Where we need to be



PRIORITY ONE



State Home of Community Football Pathways

Recognising it as the sport’s primary infrastructure priority, FQ aims to establish a consolidated State Home of Community Football at Meakin Park.

This project is poised to deliver statewide benefits, ranging from community engagement, player pathways through to elite sports, including preparations for Brisbane 2032 and AFC26. It will significantly contribute to local economic growth and enhance physical and mental well-being through improved facility access, events at various levels (local, state, and national), and community activations.

By addressing current challenges and limitations, the proposed State Home of Community Football will also support Brisbane 2032 and AFC26 by providing world-class training facilities for sports utilising rectangular fields and indoor sports surfaces. As of December 2023, the estimated cost of this project is \$70 million.



Key Benefits

- Local economic activity
- Multi-purpose indoor facility access
- International level training facility
- Supports local sports clubs
- Community access
- Economic activity through events

PRIORITY TWO



Community Football Infrastructure Fund

As football in Queensland experiences consistent, exponential growth, increasing stress is being placed on football facilities across the state regarding capacity and capability.

It is vitally important, especially post-FWWC23, that football and its 308 clubs are well positioned to service the needs of a growing, diverse participation base at club facilities. To address these gaps, Football Queensland will seek Government support for a Community Football Infrastructure Fund, an initiative proposing a targeted co-contribution funding model in partnership with the Queensland State Government.

This model would see \$20 million per annum invested over an initial three-year period in capacity and capability improvement projects, such as gender-neutral change facilities, lighting, drainage and irrigation, and new fields.

Additionally, Football Queensland will continue to advocate for community football investment through government grants and opportunities for investment during election periods, annually setting a target of a minimum of 20 facility improvements.



Key Benefits



improved club capacity and capability



Targeted investment (need as opposed to want)



Promotes football & Government co-contribution model

PRIORITY THREE



Tier 2 Stadium Fit-For-Purpose Stadia

The development of a Tier 2 Stadium would bring significant benefits to football and its many supporters in South East Queensland, as well as other rectangular code sports.

The proposed new stadium aims to support the professional game in the state by providing a state-of-the-art venue tailored for football and other rectangular code sports as needed. It will also function as a versatile facility capable of hosting a range of events from conferences to concerts.

With a seating capacity of 15,000 to 20,000, this venue would enhance Brisbane's ability to host national and international events while bolstering the growing female professional sports scene - a critical need for the sport given current challenges in access and commercial viability.

Furthermore, leveraging the hosting of Brisbane 2032 can expedite and maximise the realisation of this venue. As of December 2023, the estimated cost for this project is \$200 million.



Key Benefits



Fit-for-purpose football stadia



Supports professional sports' economic viability



Promotes Brisbane as a global sport capital

ENABLERS

Business Intelligence

Football Queensland, in collaboration with Football Australia and its other eight member federations, introduced the sport's inaugural National Football Facilities Audit Tool. This innovative tool nationally consolidates data from over 13.5 million data points, providing crucial business intelligence. It enables Football Queensland to pinpoint infrastructure gaps affecting clubs' ability to meet participant needs. Additionally, the tool assesses clubs' capacity and capability concerning key infrastructure assets such as change rooms, lighting, and drainage. This positions Football Queensland to effectively advise all levels of government on prioritising investments in infrastructure development.

Workforce Capability

Football Queensland has made significant investments in enhancing workforce capabilities across infrastructure, government relations, and project management. This heightened expertise will enable Football Queensland to effectively utilise business intelligence assets, strategically positioning football more effectively. It will also strengthen the development of robust position statements and enhanced project leadership in infrastructure initiatives. Moreover, this improved workforce capability will proactively collaborate with clubs to prepare for potential funding opportunities that will arise between 2024 and 2026.

Mobilised Participant Base

With over 300,000 active participants and an additional 1 million Queenslanders directly or indirectly connected to the sport, football possesses a substantial base from which to engage and garner support for its priority projects. Between 2024 and 2026, Football Queensland aims to strengthen its relationships with the participant base of the sport. This initiative involves educating and empowering participants to effectively communicate their stories and needs to all levels of government, facilitating greater advocacy and support for football initiatives across Queensland.



Campaigns

Football Queensland plans to launch targeted campaigns focusing on key events and participant segments to showcase infrastructure needs and attract investment opportunities. Leveraging Business Intelligence, enhanced workforce capabilities, and an engaged participant base, these campaigns will drive initiatives such as Election Campaigns, campaigns for hosting international events like Brisbane 2032 and AFC26, and Public Relations and Advocacy efforts. They will employ a data-driven approach, combining quantitative data analysis with compelling storytelling to effectively convey the impact and importance of football infrastructure projects.

Advocacy and Submissions

Football Queensland will engage with all levels of government to advocate for the sport's infrastructure needs, ensuring football is well positioned for support. This advocacy effort will include targeted submissions to budget allocations, Cabinet Budget Review Committee/Expenditure Review Committee submissions, AFC26 legacy submissions and other relevant channels, supported by robust data-driven proposals. These submissions will be informed by thorough data analysis and extensive consultation with football in Queensland and Football Australia where required, ensuring alignment with football's needs and priorities. From 2024 to 2026, the primary focus will be on advancing three core infrastructure projects: the State Home of Community Football (Pathways), Community Football Infrastructure Fund, and a Tier 2 Stadium (Fit-For-Purpose Stadia), aimed at enhancing football facilities and opportunities across Queensland.

Education

Football Queensland will leverage its business intelligence assets to develop comprehensive reports aimed at assisting all levels of government in identifying and addressing infrastructure capacity and capability gaps throughout Queensland. These reports will not only highlight the specific needs of football infrastructure but also provide detailed business cases and compelling proposals. By educating stakeholders and demonstrating thoroughness in addressing targeted infrastructure priorities, Football Queensland aims to instil high levels of confidence in the recipients of these proposals. This approach ensures that football's infrastructure requirements are effectively communicated and prioritised for meaningful support and investment.



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