



2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT



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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In 2021-22, football in the Northern Territory continued to play a crucial role as part of fabric of our community.

As the body charged with the oversight of the game it was both a challenge and a privilege to again be a part of the ups and downs, high and lows, debate and argument that is an integral part of our game – and to watch some of the best football played in the Territory in both the men's and the women's game.

In this report I would like to give two examples of the way in which our football community operates and the capacity of the people that are involved.

The first example concerns the critical challenge that faced the NTFL when COVID-19 numbers surged over the Christmas period in 2021-22. The surge in cases threatened the continuation of the TIO NTFL season in 2022 and may have caused the season to be cancelled. To work our way through the issues Sam Gibson and I called a series of meetings of the Presidents of the NTFL clubs and the Umpires and we spoke with each of the coaches of the Premier League NTFL teams. After these discussions, the consensus was that the football community wanted to continue to play under the safest conditions possible and within the rules set by the Northern Territory Government. It was felt that the greater risk was in not resuming the season and leaving players, club members and supporters without the usual engagement that football brings to their lives. A decision requiring the trust of all parties was taken to play on and the competitions resumed as planned at the start of January with the end result that all TIO NTFL competitions concluded as planned in March 2022.

Without the support of the presidents, the coaches, the players, the umpires, and the fans these difficult decisions would not have been possible. Without the follow-up commitment of all parties working with AFLNT the games simply could not have got underway when they did let alone be carried out in the safe yet competitive manner in which they were.

The second example is from Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island). In the 2022 dry season football participation at Galiwin'ku exploded. The competition had 9 men's teams and 7 women's teams competing and each weekend there was all-in community participation around games that became the centrepiece of the community's activities for the week. The feedback from the four dedicated AFLNT staff who support the competition at Galiwinku was that the football was good, the community loved it and that life was better when football was being played. Such that at the end of the dry season competition, the community decided to start a new season. Presently a wet season competition is running at Galiwin'ku with 9 men's and 4 women's team competing.

Galiwin'ku is not unique. In the last 3 years, 60 new teams and nearly 1000 new players have been registered in community football across the Northern Territory. Women's football in the Territory is seeing exponential growth with 291 more women registering to play AFL this season again over the last. Since 2019, a total of 773 more women have registered to play AFL in the Northern Territory. In our junior competitions, participants have grown by 1463 players since 2019 and by 67 teams. In the NTFL alone in the Under 10's through to the Under 18's male and female competitions there has been an increase of 26 teams and 662 players.

This nation-best participation is a platform to build on and it is a great challenge for the AFLNT Board and executive team at AFLNT to honour this participation and continue to create the environment for young men and women, their families, and their fans to enjoy and to thrive playing the game of Australian Rules Football in the Territory. It's a challenge we take very seriously.

We continue our focus on achieving a major infrastructure package for remote Territory communities and upgrades in Alice Springs, Katherine, and Tennant Creek. The state of football ovals and facilities in our regional areas is sub-standard and preventing further development of the game. We are continuing to work as a priority with the Commonwealth and NT Governments on developing a major package for infrastructure development of this type.

In 2023, we will also be releasing the work of the Territory AFL Team Taskforce which I co-chair with Minister Kate Worden. In the first quarter of 2023, the Taskforce will complete a Social Impact Evaluation and a Strategic Business Case which will enable us to build the roadmap towards an AFL team. Linked to this is the work being done around a multipurpose stadium located in the heart of Darwin as an iconic centrepiece for sport in the Territory. This stadium is intended for all codes and to provide a platform not just for national and international sport but also major events generally.

The AFL continue to invest in the Northern Territory providing funding support of ~ \$3 million 2021-22 and we again benefited from the continuous support and guidance of their CEO, Gillon McLachlan and the Executive Team, in particular Rob Auld and Andrew Dillon.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of AFLNT Board who give their time freely and generously to the development of our game and the total day-in day-out commitment of the AFLNT executive team and staff, led by Sam Gibson. I acknowledge our Life Members, who are our elders, and thank them for their continued service to our game. Thank you to the fans, the players, the umpires, the volunteers, the club officials, and all those who day in and day out contribute to the game of football in the Northern Territory. And thank you to the Larrakia People and all traditional owners who give AFLNT the gift of playing our great game on your country.

S.Bowden

Sean Bowden Chairman

1,463
New players in junior competitions since 2019



#### HEAD OF AFLNT REPORT

I am pleased to present this report for the 2021/22 financial year, a year in which football continued to take great strides across the Northern Territory.

Throughout the year, and in all pockets of the Territory, a lot of hard work went into ensuring that all Territorian's had the opportunity to engage in our great game. The stories that arise show what football means to the Territory which is a privilege to be a part of.

Community football was again a vibrant and crucial part of our game in 2021/22 with competitions continuing to be a big part of Territory communities. We saw pleasing growth in participation across all competitions, especially in female participation which continues to go from strength to strength. We also enjoyed another year growing the profile of the TIO NTFL competition in partnership with the NT News with the streaming of matches attracting more than 150,000 viewers, many of whom reside interstate. Growing the game at the grass roots continues to be a focus of AFLNT's with lot's of work being done to provide everyone with a chance to engage with football. As the jurisdiction with the highest per-capita participation rates in the country, the NT has an amazing platform to continue to grow from.

Of course community football doesn't thrive without the hard work and dedication of many, a notion that was tested and proven during the challenges of COVID felt in January of 2022. The easiest decision at this time would have been to press pause on the TIO NTFL season which was just over half way through. Instead, the collective

approach that was devised and executed by club presidents, coaches, the AFLNT Board and staff, umpires and many others enabled the season to be completed in March safely, appropriately and with great football played throughout. It is this collective passion for the game and the role it plays that will continue to take us forward.

The work done in remote areas of the Territory, in conjunction with the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre programs continues to be a key part of our core business. Whilst 2021/22 was a challenging year in this space due to COVID, the re-engagement of football with communities in the middle of 2022 led to so many positive stories and proved the important role our game can play in achieving both football and non-football outcomes throughout the community. With programs in place across more than fifty communities, and MLLLC programs running year round, football is well placed to continue to be a key part of all NT communities.

Our work with respect to our facilities continued to be a focus in 2021/22. Whilst the continued growth in participation in football is an immense positive, it is creating a challenge in ensuring we have adequate places to play and train. With the support of the AFL we are investing heavily in this space with a focus on ensuring we continue to improve our facilities, have data driven plans to advocate with and have an eye to the future. This includes considerable work being done in looking at remote facilities where we acknowledge a notable deficit in the facilities available to enjoy not only football, recreational activity more broadly.

It was a big year for AFL games in the Territory with three games held including a double header in Darwin and a game in Alice Springs. Following a disappointing 2021 where the impact of COVID saw no games in the NT, it was pleasing to see Territorians with more chances to see the elite level in their backyard. It was also pleasing to see the commitment from AFL clubs to the NT community with the Gold Coast SUNS doing considerable work in the Top End and the Melbourne Football Club continuing their strong relationship with Central Australia.

When it comes to talent, we continue to focus on providing young people across the NT with the best opportunities to fulfil their potential. Whilst draftees is the key measurement in this space, we also focus on and value the quality of the program and the impact it will have on Territory football for years to come. Five draftees from the NT for the year was a good result for the Territory with J'Noemi Anderson (StKilda), Alwyn Davey Junior, Anthony Munkara and Jayden Davey (Essendon) and Lloyd Johnston (Gold Coast) all making their way into the elite game. Moving forward our talent program will now also include a Central Australian Academy which will provide a renewed focus on the raft of talent that exists across the region.

A big thanks needs to be extended to those that continue to support our game across the NT. We receive enormous support from the AFL who's leadership and ongoing investment must be acknowledged. So too does the support we are afforded by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments. We are also fortunate to have strong, long term partnerships with key partners in TIO, Cazalys Palmerston and MACC. This support, along with the support of many others, goes a long way in advancing our sport for everyone to enjoy.

Personally I would like to thank the AFLNT Board of Directors, led by Chairman Sean Bowden, for continuing to commit their time, passion and expertise to our organisation. I would also like to thank AFLNT's leadership team and our entire staff for everything they do across the year for the betterment of our game. Finally, to the broader football community, on behalf of AFLNT I thank you for your work across 2021/22. The dedication we see daily from clubs, committees, volunteers, coaches, umpires, players, parents, spectators and supporters is inspiring and is the key ingredient behind our game's success year in year out.

Looking forward, we have a range of key priorities that will receive our focus and energy. This includes continuing to drive community football, working collaboratively to attract much needed investment into facilities, enhancing our offerings to participants in regional and remote settings, supporting those who make our game great and embedding high quality talent pathways across the NT.

Sam Gibson

S. Gibson

Sam Gibson Head of AFLNT



#### **AFLNT DIRECTORS**



#### MR SEAN BOWDEN - CHAIRMAN

- Bachelor of Laws (with Honours)
- Partner, Bowden McCormack Lawyers & Advisers
- Former player Richmond Football Club (FC), Port Melbourne FC,
- Rovers FC (Alice Springs)
- VFA Representative player 1994, 1995
- Premiership Coach, Rovers FC, CAFL1996



#### **MR ROB AULD**

- AFL Executive General Manager Game Development
- Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Accounting
- 15-year career with Lion, working across finance, logistics and sales in winery and dairy business units
- Joined the AFL in 2016 as CEO of AFL Tasmania
- 2018 was appointed to Head of Game Development
- 2020 was appointed General Manager of AFL competitions including umpiring, competition management, game analysis and player movement
- 2021 was appointed as Executive
  General Manager Game
  Development, which includes
  responsibility for all participation and
  programs including the portfolios
  of Auskick, Schools, Diversity and
  Inclusion, as well as Community
  Football governance and facility
  development



#### **MRS DIANNE BORELLA**

- Master of Public Health
- Diploma of Social Science and Management
- Company Director Dianne Borella Consultancy Pty Ltd.
- Accredited Trainer Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid
- Cert IV Mentoring Diverse Groups
- Life Member Nightcliff Football Club
- Past President Rotary Club of Darwin
  Sunrise

- Recipient of Paul Harris Fellow Award
- Recipient of Sapphire Paul Harris
   Fellow Award
- NT Thunder Football Club Volunteer of the Year Award
- Long Term Employee Australian Public Service with experience in Education, Employment, Training, Youth affairs, Aboriginal Health, Law & Order.
- Member of well-respected local sporting family



#### **MR NIGEL BROWNE**

- Current CEO of the Larrakia Development Corporation, serving as a Director from 2005 and Chair from 2010 to 2013
- Bachelor of Laws
- Crown Prosecutor (ODPPNT),
- ► Aboriginal Lands (SFNT)
- Policy Adviser (Chief Minister's Office)
- Director The Healing Foundation
- Director Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation

- Director Aboriginal Area Protection Authority(NT)
- Director Menzies School of Health
  Research
- Director National Centre for Indigenous Excellence.
- Served as a Patrolman with NORFORCE and is a serving Legal Officer (RANR)
- 2011 National Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year
- Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors



#### **MR LINCOLN JENKIN**

- Regional Manager of Carlton & United Breweries NT
- NT resident for over 4 decades, one of those in Alice Springs
- Inaugural member and former Chairman, Northern Territory FC
- Has a strong NT football background having played in Central Australia
- (Federal FC and Wests FC) and Darwin (Wanderers FC and Banks FC) competitions
- Served on a variety of FC committees and coached at several levels, including premiership teams
- Is involved with NT Masters AFL
- Is a lifelong Essendon Bombers supporter



#### MS KATHLEEN COLE

- Bachelor of Business Major Accounting
- Graduate Diploma of Public Health Indigenous Health
- Masters of Community Management
- Fellow of Australian Certified Accountants
- Executive Management within NT 15 years
- Member of Waratahs Football Club 12 years

- Executive officer Miriam Rose Foundation
- Independent non-executive director for Perpetual Trustees
- Chairperson of NT Australian Red Cross Advisor Board
- Lived in the Northern Territory for 38 years.
- ▶ Graduate of AICD



#### **MR THOMAS WILCOX**

- 20 years of experience in legal and corporate governance roles in Australia and overseas, predominantly in the resources sector
- Currently General Counsel & Company Secretary of ASX-listed New Century Resources Limited
- Former captain, premiership player and Executive Committee member
- with the University Blues Football Club in the Premier Division of the Victorian Amateur Football Association
- Master of Laws (LLM); Bachelor of Laws (LLB); Bachelor of Commerce (BCom)
- Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD)



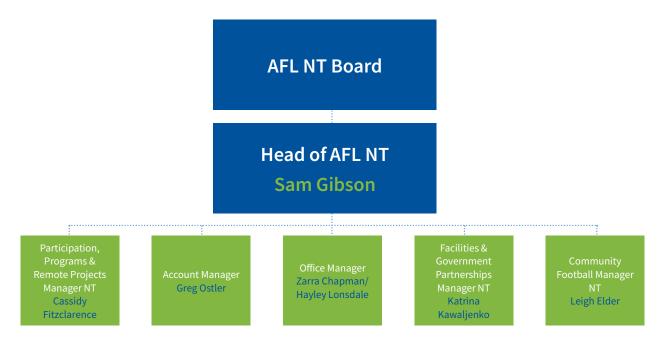
#### DR JOSIE DOUGLAS (PHD)

- Executive management experience

   General Manager Health Services
   Division (Central Australian Aboriginal
   Congress) and Executive Manager,
   Policy and Governance (Central
   Land Council)
- Long-time advocate for social justice, community and policy development in Aboriginal Affairs
- Extensive background working for the Aboriginal community controlled sector

- Has held senior research roles at CSIRO and Charles Darwin University
- Award winning researcher, including the recipient of the prestigious W.H.
   Stanner Award (2017)
- Ministerial appointments at the Commonwealth and NT level (education and training, environment, AFL)
- Community volunteer

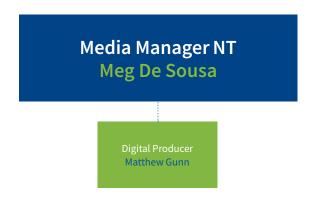
### AFL NORTHERN TERRITORY ORGANISATIONAL CHARTS



#### **COMMERCIAL, FACILITIES, GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS AND EVENTS**



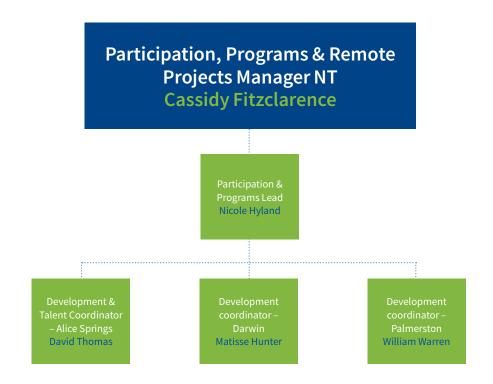
#### MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



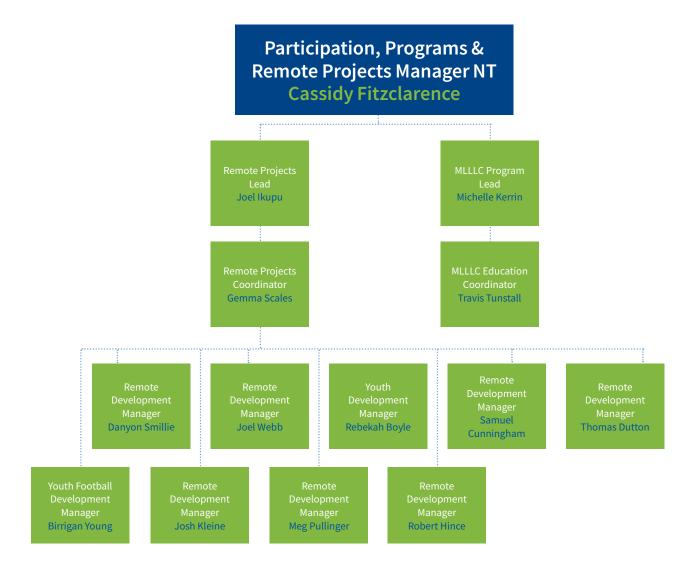
#### **COMMUNITY FOOTBALL & CLUB DEVELOPMENT**



#### **GAME DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**



#### **REMOTE PROJECTS**



#### **TALENT**



# **AFLNT Strategic Priorities 22/23**

#### **Key Business** Areas

### **COMPETITIONS &** CLUBS

## PARTICIPATION & **PROGRAMS**

# REMOTE

# **PROGRAMS**

### **GOVERNMENT FACILITIES &**

# STADIUM & EVENTS

TALENT PATHWAYS

# including AFL Games Strong bounce back from Lead the development of • Deliver high quality remote facilities based on

community need, accessibility and sustainability

Long-term sustainability

programs through both

**Auskick and School** 

Efficient and effective

governance models,

orograms

providing greater support

to competitions across

Position AFL as the #1

sport for introductory

sporting competition in

the NT.

NTFL - the premier

for AFLNT remote projects & MLLLC

operating models at TIO Stadium and the MLLLC Support the delivery of Drive sustainable

Drive a national strategy

around remote facility

Enhance the consumer activities and events through the NTFL standards and operations

Manage a hierarchy of

based programs that lead

to greater community

**Establish the future** 

outcomes

direction of MLLLC

participation programs

Drive growth through different formats that

align with consumer

Deliver quality football

unior participants from • Increase the transition of

ntroductory programs

to community football

**Embed diversity and** 

inclusion within all

programs

- Drive greater investment growing consumer needs facilities that are fit for facilities that cater for medium – long term in new and existing purpose and meet
- across the three tiers of

- greater accessibility and across the business that promote AFL, including experience to enable
  - managed facilities and Maximise commercial return on AFLNT patronage

- Support fundamental skill the NT
- programs that enable connection between Deliver high quality Design and deliver and urban settings
- Drive greater engagement with key stakeholders across the NT
  - and service providers

# **Priorities**

- players, coaches, umpires and administrators, with a Sustainable pathways for
- focus on Women and
  - environment strategies. Create positive game
- **Enhance Coach Education** across all competitions.
  - for competitions & clubs Long-term sustainability

Create strategies to

recruit and retain

umpires.

- the delivery network to nterest and demand cater for increased
- growth

education and leadership

programs

**Enhance the capacity of** 

MLLLC to lead all AFL focussed Indigenous

programs

Foster strong relationships Government

- identify talent early across Work collaboratively to
- players in remote, regional development throughout youth football
  - performance programs for u16 and u18 age groups
    - including NGA's, coaches

# COMMUNITY



#### **CAFL**

The 75th TIO CAFL Season saw the continued growth of football within Central Australia, with 40 Teams competing in over 250 matches throughout the Season.

The introduction of the E-Points system across all competitions supported an improvement in spectator behaviour and the overall match day environment, helping to restore attendance following two (2) Seasons impacted by COVID-19.

Alice Springs was again host of the *Heart* of the Nation match, with the Melbourne Demons defeating Port Adelaide thanks to a stellar, six (6) goal performance from Kysaiah Pickett in front of just over 6,300 fans.

The Under 15 Junior Men kicked off the end of season celebrations, by attracting families and a supporter base just shy of 1000 people, to witness the top of the table clash between South Alice Springs and Federal. Federal again upsetting South in a thriller, to take home a consecutive victory.



Alkamilya won an inaugural Under 16 Junior Women Premiership on Friday night, before Rovers made it a three-peat, defeating first time grand finalists, West, for their third straight Senior Women Premiership.

On Saturday afternoon, minor Premiers, South Alice Springs took out their consecutive Under 18 Junior Men Premiership in front of our biggest Grand Final crowd in as many years. Federal returned to the podium after a dominating second half in the Reserve Grade Senior Men. Pioneer then broke their 12-year Premiership draught, resisting a 65m kick after the siren to celebrate their 75th year in style.

The 2022 Community Senior Men Competition saw the inclusion of Engawala and Mutitjulu, Engawala narrowly missing the finals, finishing below Mutitjulu by a mere 6%. Mt Allan Eagles were again crowned Premiers, after a thrilling match with Papunya. Daniel Stafford Jnr kicked 5 goals, receiving the

Patrick Nandy Medal, and helping to secure the Premiership following seven (7) lead changes throughout the match.

Daniel Gorry from Federal was awarded the 2022 Minahan Medal, while West's Caitlin Couch was honored with her consecutive Senior Women's Margaret Liddle Medal. Western Aranda youngster, Paddy Patlas was also recognized for his dominating performance in the Community Senior Men, earning himself the Williams/Pareroultja Medal.

AFLNT wish to extend their gratitude and thanks to all volunteers for their tireless work throughout the 2022 Season. We acknowledge contributions made by those, including our Life Members, which have allowed the Competition to prosper for the past 75 years and look forward to welcoming you all to what promises to be an even bigger 2023 TIO CAFL Season!



#### **BAFL**

Season 32 of the BAFL saw the introduction of a Senior Women's competition.

With 4 clubs entering teams and following on from successful preseason trial matches 9 rounds were played followed by finals and the result saw Ali Curung win the inaugural flag in extra time against the YDU Demons. In the Senior Men's competition, 7 teams competed and were split into the A-grade and Division 2 final at the conclusion of the home and away season. Spitfires claimed the A-grade title and Eagles the Division 2 title. Kane Sevallos was voted best on ground in the men's, Isiah Farrell-Nelson in Division 2 and Eeliyah Brown best of ground in the Women's.

The end of season awards saw the introduction of a Rising Star award in both the Men's and Women's Competition. With Canteen Creek's Delina Butcher awarded the women's and Lucas Martin from Ali Curung taking out the Men's. The A Grade Patrons Medal went to Nicky Poulson from Ali Curung and the Best and Fairest in the Senior Women's Competition went to Eeliyah Brown (Ali Curung). Leading goalkickers were Lane Jackson from Spitfires in the Men's and Rebecca White shared the women's with fellow YDU Demon player Nikita Camphoo.

The AFL Community Camp was again held virtually and several schools in Barkly were able to engage with Collingwood players through the Zoom platform. In the talent space we had Stanley Waistcoat represent the Barkly in the NT U18 side that competed in the NAB League.





#### **BRFL**

2022 was an exciting time for AFL in the Big Rivers region.

The Big Rivers Football League (previously the KDFL) entered its 36th year with the inception of the Daly River Buffaloes for the first time and welcomed Garrak Bombers and Ngukurr Bulldogs women's teams for the first time.

With the competition heavily hampered by COVID-19 in 2021, everyone involved was eagerly awaiting the 2022 season which saw a 6-team competition in the Women's and an 8 team competition in the Men's. The league introduced a "Bush Round" in Round 9 to allow remote teams the opportunity to host a home game, which was an extremely successful initiative. Another new initiative for 2022 was a partnership between AFLNT and Roper Gulf Regional Council to host NAIDOC Round at Jilkmingann Oval, 145km south east of Katherine.

After 15 rounds and 2 rounds of Finals football, the Ngukurr Bulldogs and 2021 runners up the Katherine Camels played off in the Senior Men's Grand Final with the Camels defeating an inaccurate Bulldogs. In the Women's, the Ngukurr Bulldogs in their first year faced

off against league heavyweights Eastside in the Grand Final. Ngukurr led with only a few minutes remaining, however, a goal from Eastside put them in front and they held on to claim the premiership.

Amie Antonello from Katherine South won the leagues Women's Best and Fairest Medal, whilst Ricky Walsh from the Katherine Camels took out home the Best and Fairest, Doug Kelly medal.

Other highlights of the year included an ever expanding under 12 school competition in which Clyde Fenton Primary were the eventual winners. A mixed Arnhem Crows/Ngukurr Bulldogs women's team traveled to Darwin to take on a combined Tiwi/ Elcho Island team which was a wonderful experience for all involved. Our under-15 boys travelled to Darwin to compete in the Michael Long Cup and a Big Rivers Under 19's representative side hosted St Mary's College from Geelong and only went down by 1 point.

With a focus on innovative programs in Katherine, a second Auskick timeslot was added during the dry season, Kindykick and AFL9's was introduced and for the first time a Footy for Life program run for young people with disabilities.

#### NTFL

The 2021-22 TIO NTFL season presented many challenges: a new software platform in PlayHQ, COVID cases, and restrictions that forced over 80 forfeits throughout the season. However, it was a credit to all the clubs and players that we could make it through the year.

The TIO NTFL Women's Premier League saw Melinda Taylors' Darwin Buffaloes going one better than the season before and defeating Nightcliff in their first appearance in a Grand Final by 18 points. Dominque Carbone was named the Williams Medallist for her beston-ground performance on the day, and was later drafted to the AFLW with Hawthorn Football Club.







New challenges emerged, and we had our first new premiers in four years, with St Mary's improving on their last two seasons defeating Waratah by 35 points. This was Waratah's first appearance in an MPL Grand Final since 2007-08.

This year was both Darwin and Saint's first premiership since 2016-17.

In the TIO NTFL Women's Premier League, Darwin's Molly Althouse took out the Gwynne Medal at the young age of 20. The Nichols Medal was a tie, a rarity in football, with Daniel Bowles from Nightcliff and Eric Guthrie from Palmerston Magpies (The club's first since 1982-83). St Mary's Jackson Calder claimed the Dennis Dunn Leading Goal Kicking award presented by Darwin Family Law with 70 goals to his name in the Premier League season. Jackson then topped off his season by taking out the Chaney Medal and being judged best afield in the decider, where he booted five majors.



#### **UMPIRING**

The AFLNT umpiring programs across all our urban and regional regions were able to navigate through many challenges and successfully service our competitions during 2021-22.

The 2021-22 NTFL season commenced the season with good umpiring numbers, however like many parts of community football, regular availability of umpires was a challenge early in 2022 due to the pandemic. The 2021-22 season saw an overall reduction in umpire numbers from 257 in 2020-21 to 172 in the 2021-22 season.

The dedication and commitment shown from all our programs was outstanding and AFLNT would like to sincerely thank all of those that have adjudicated in many games across our competitions. Our NTFL interstate

recruitment program saw seven umpires relocate to Darwin for the season and equated to officiating 16% of total games. This successful initiative is critical to the servicing of our NTFL competition and provides the unique opportunity for quality umpires interstate to experience the Territory.

AFLNT would like to thank Phillip Nippress and Matt Skoss for their outstanding commitments to assist in servicing the umpiring group in the Central Australian Football League.

Brett Stephenson and Daryl Grahek were key contributors to ensuring the Big Rivers Football League was adjudicated to the highest standards.

In addition, the support from John Rowsthorne and Mark Noonan from the NTFL UA was much appreciated in contributing to the social cohesion of the NTFL umpiring cohort.



The most prestigious umpire award across our main competitions is the Golden Whistle. Congratulations to the following umpires who received the Golden Whistle in 2022:

- NTFL Cooper Raine (boundary)
- ▶ **BRFL** Dean Sullivan (field)
- ► CAFL Wally Gallio (field)

AFLNT congratulates Joel Morrison who was once again the recipient of the ABC Umpire of the Year for the TIO NTFL 2021-22 season.

2022 saw three of our young umpires selected for AFLW with and all umpiring in several games and represented the NT with a great sense of pride and professionalism.

- ► Emma Stark (field)
- Cooper Raine (boundary)
- ► Isabelle Rawsthorne (goals)

With the AFL post-covid investment into umpiring under the 10% enshrined revenue percentage dedicated to community

football, two positions have been created and dedicated to umpiring; an Umpiring Coordinator and the new created national role – Recruitment and Retention Lead.

AFLNT and the AFL recognise that the recruitment and retention is priority moving into 2023 in addition to:

- Grow the pool of umpire coaches
- Develop strategies for retaining umpires
- Continue to develop strong relationships with Umpire Associations
- Create a positive, vibrant and fun culture
- Provide transparent and honest communication regarding umpiring appointments
- ▶ Strengthen resources

We are looking forward to a strong end to the 2022-23 NTFL season and supporting our regional and remote competitions throughout the winter of 2023.



#### GAME DEVELOPMENT



2022 has been a great year for the Game Development team, with most programs going ahead, some for the first time since 2019.

Auskick participation was strong in 2022, with 922 registered participants and 2089 remote participants across the Northern Territory, only slightly below our strongest ever year in 2019. With the introduction of two new Club run centers hosted by the Wanderers Football Club and Palmerston Football Clubs. Both new centers have been greatly positive for the community, with Palmerston engaging 91 registered participants, becoming the largest center throughout the NT.

The Wanderers Football Club teamed up with the Aboriginal town camp of Bagot to host their center, which provided a great opportunity to engage Aboriginal youth from the community. All but one NTFL club

hosts their own Auskick Centers, with plans underway to have all clubs hosting centers in 2023.

The first fully registered Auskick Center was established in a remote NT community in 2022 in the community of Galiwinku, Elcho Island. With over 70 children registered to participate, supported by a Connected Beginnings grant to assist paying for gear, equipment, and participant packs. A significant outcome of the program was the strong engagement of local parents, led by Vera York who championed the center and was rewarded with a trip to the AFLW Grand Final in Brisbane with her two children.

The 2022-23 NTFL season also saw the first ever All girls Under 10's NTFL competition, with 6 teams competing and approximately 90 girls registered to play. This competition ran alongside the mixed gender Under 10's Competition, which also saw a record number of 20 teams participating.



The competition has run extremely smoothly through the addition of new venues and schedule changes, allowing for the new teams to participate.

AFLNT fielded a team at the AFL National Inclusion Carnival in the Barossa Valley, for the first time since 2019, with one player also being selected in the All-Australian team. In addition, AFLNT competed in the national AFL Wheelchair Championships for the first time in 2022. The strong showing at national inclusion carnivals has provided a strong base to embed more local programs in 2023 through wheelchair AFL competitions and enhanced inclusion programs.

Darwin hosted the largest ever dry season AFL 9's competition 2022 with 22 teams competing across two divisions. This has increased from 17 teams in 2021, which was our most successful to date. Both divisions being hotly contested and played in good spirits. AFL 9's continues to grow in

Central Australia too with the first remote competition taking place in Santa Teresa following the completion of the CAFL season. Alternative formats will continue to expand in 2023 while AFLNT explores, new and fun ways of engaging new participants to play AFL football.

AFL schools programs continued to expand in 2022 with a big push from the national AFL schools' team to ensure all schools in Australia partake in AFL programs. Alice Springs saw a huge growth in AFL school engagement with a 41% growth in participation from 2021. The pre Auskick program 'Kinder Kick' also saw significant outcomes in Alice Springs with over 80 children registered which is a great sign for the future of AFL in Central Australia.

2023 shapes up to be an exciting year for the Game Development team throughout the NT, with a raft of new programs to be delivered and revamping of some existing programs.

# AFLNT REMOTE PROJECTS



The AFLNT Remote Projects team continued to deliver high-quality AFL programs to support strong community-wide outcomes throughout 2022.

The team combined ongoing structured AFL programs and competitions with new, exciting initiatives in each of their respective regions. The remote projects hosted projects throughout the following regions in 2022; Central Australia, Lajamanu, Katherine & Big Rivers Region, Wadeye, Tiwi Islands, Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Elcho Island, Gove, and Groote Eylandt.

Representative football highlighted the remote projects calendar this year. In June, senior men's representative teams travelled from the Tiwi Islands (TIFL) and Gove (GAFL) to Darwin to play a curtain-raiser match ahead of the Gold Coast SUNS v North Melbourne Toyota AFL Premiership fixture. In September, women from Tiwi Islands, Elcho Island, Barunga, and Ngukurr participated in a similar opportunity to demonstrate their skills and AFL abilities through an AFLW grant and funding provided by the Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation and the Northern Territory Government.

New ground was broken in Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island as it became the first fully registered NAB Auskick Centre in a remote NT location. Thanks to funding provided by the Yalu Aboriginal Corporation through the 'Connected Beginnings' funding steam over 70 children on the island were registered through PlayHQ and received Auskick packs and completed the 6-week program.

A highlight of this program was the leadership shown by Yolngu parents to deliver the clinics after receiving training and development support from AFLNT. Vera York was a prominent parent leading the program as a NAB Auskick centre coach and was rewarded with a trip to the AFLW Grand Final in Brisbane with two of her children. Only students who met school attendance targets of 60%+ were rewarded with the Auskick program. This Auskick model will be replicated in other Remote community locations throughout 2023.

The AFLNT remote projects also expanded local, casual workforce throughout 2022. Across the year, additional funding was secured for 11 casual roles across Galiwin'ku, Groote Eylandt, Maningrida, Central Australia, and Lajamanu. These roles include match managers, umpire directors, NAB Auskick coordinators, and game development coordinators. AFLNT is thrilled to employ local men and women in AFLNT roles throughout remote communities and look forward to seeing their career progression throughout 2023.

Female AFL programs continued to expand and gather momentum throughout remote Aboriginal communities of the NT. This growth was highlighted throughout Central Australia, with 350 female footballers attending the Arlparra Sports Carnival and an overall increase in female attendance at carnivals across the region. On Tiwi Islands, a regular women's training program across Wurrumiyanga, Milikapiti, and Pirlangimbi run by AFLNT staff supported the introduction of the Tiwi Bombers Women's team in the NTFL and the formation of the first female TIFL competition in 2023.

The AFLNT remote projects team continued to explore alternative formats of AFL programs to achieve strong community benefits. In Santa Teresa, Central Australia the team piloted an AFL9's competition targeting whole-of-family participation. The 6-week program saw NAB Auskick, Junior X, and AFL 9's delivered for men and women delivered weekly and included a healthy meal. This is the first program of its kind to have entire families engaging in AFLNT programs during the same day and show great potential for other regions. In East Arnhem, students under 15 from Groote Eylandt, Galiwin'ku, Milingimbi, Gapuwiyak, Ramingining, Nhulunbuy, and Gunyangara travelled to Yirrkala for an AFLX carnival. Miwatj Health and the NTG Harm Minimisation Unit (Alcohol and Other Drugs) delivered health education sessions with all participants.

With a full team of Remote Development Managers and the impacts of Covid 19 easing AFLNT is looking forward to an exciting year ahead in 2023 for the remote projects team. AFLNT continues to be the only peak sporting body to host full time staff in remote communities and use the power of AFL to have wholistic positive impacts on people's lives through engagement in sport, positive social connections, dedicated education, employment and social harmony outcomes.



#### MICHAEL LONG LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP CENTRE

2022 has been an exciting year for the Michael Long learning and Leadership Centre programs despite the ongoing challenges of Covid-19

Early in 2022, Michelle Kerrin stepped into the role of MLLLC Program Lead. Michelle is Arrernte women and renowned artist who is passionate about supporting Indigenous youth from the Territory to reach their full potential. Michelle has been a wonderful addition to the MLLLC team and has a great perspective on the program and the evolution of the programs.

The MLLLC facility also received a minor facelift in 2022 with the addition of murals and artwork to inject colour and vibrancy into the space. AFLNT engaged local Darwin artists *Proper Creative* to design and install artwork that had local cultural significance, provided colour and demonstrated the journey from playing footy in remote communities to the AFL.

The ongoing presence of Covid-19 in the community meant schools from remote Aboriginal communities could not travel over 200kms for overnight camps as directed the NTG Department of Education for the majority of 2022. These restrictions meant the MLLLC team had to explore creative solutions to ensure programs continued and schools remained engaged with AFLNT.



The On Country model applies an additional lens to the MLLLC programs through a two-way learning and community responsive framework. Staff delivered a foundation Make Your Mark leadership and education model, consisting of hands-on activities, values-based learning and community applied knowledges and skills, to approximately 150 students across the NT.

including Maningrida, Hermannsburg,

Laynhapuy Homelands and Milingimbi.

Through community consultation it was evident the MLLLC programs delivered in community schools, encouraged students to attend school prior to and during the MLLLC programs, including many students returning to the classroom after an extended period away.

Residential programs returned in Term 4, with approximately 80 students and 15 teachers and community support staff attending the weeklong boarding programs. Schools travelled in by air and road from Milingimbi, Elliott, Borroloola, Wadeye, Papunya, Yuendumu, Mt Liebeg and Milikapiti into Darwin for the camps.

Students travelled close to 8000kms, from a huge range of language groups and First Nations Countries. Some of the languages spoken included Ndjebenna, Kuninjku, Djambarrpuyngu, Eastern and Western Arrernte, Luritja, Kriol, Aboriginal English, Pitjantjatjara, Yolngu Matha, Murrinh Patha, Tiwi and Warlpiri, with English being the second or third language for many students.

Over the course of residential camps, students engaged with various educational and leadership activities, incorporating AFL themes and knowledges throughout. With this, students explored what it's like to live away from home through a refined boarding school structured experience, and through included tours of Darwin boarding schools.

Students also formed new relationships and were provided with new learnings with local organisations including with Aboriginal Bush Traders, NT Parliament House, NT Electoral Commission, Menzies Health, INPEX, MACC Road Safety. The students also learnt new skills around CPR, water safety and first aid training from the Darwin Surf Life Saving Club.

There were also many firsts, including being their first time on a plane, first time in an elevator, first time seeing the ocean and first time going to the movies for many students. The residential model is key to enhancing student skill and knowledges through direct, two-way learning and hands on programming.

The MLLLC programs will continue to grow through the MLLLC Evaluation conducted by Charles Darwin University, expected to be completed in 2023. This evaluation will provide feedback on the success of past programs, and recommendations for best practice programs moving forward.

Our partnerships with INPEX, MACC Road Safety, the Department of Education and the NT Transition Support Unit, were essential to the success of our 2022 MLLLC Programs. With their ongoing support, students across the NT have been able to access culturally informed educational/leadership programs and alternative learning models, to continue to enhance school attendance and personal development for Indigenous students.

2023 will see further growth of the MLLLC Programs and increased engagement with Northern Territory schools, communities, families and most importantly, the young people.





#### **TALENT**



2022 saw the NT Talent team get all programs away for the first time in 2 and half years following Covid interrupted seasons.

Whereas in previous seasons National programs reverted to Under 16 and Under 18 formats, from the Under 17 and 19's programs previously. The 2022 season kicked off with the girls playing 3 NAB League games and coming away with a first-up win against Murray Bushrangers by 2 points.

From our girls NAB League campaign we had our biggest Allies representation with 13 girls making the squad, with 2 girls going on to the NAB AFLW Academy. **J'Noemi Anderson** who would go on to be drafted to St Kilda at pick 16 and Kyanne Campbell as a bottom age representative.

In the male space we hosted our first NAB League game in a couple of years with the Geelong Falcons travelling to Darwin. Again, we saw 5 boys selected in the Allies and 2 going on to the AFL Academy in Anthony Munkara and Alwyn Davey Junior.

At the recent Draft we had another great outcome with 4 NT boys being drafted, **Alwyn Davey Junior** and **Jayden Davey**both being selected under the father son to
Essendon and **Lloyd Johnson** and **Anthony Munkara** both being Rookie listed at both
Gold Coast and Essendon. We backed up the inaugural Michael Long Cup from 2021 again in 2022 with a revised format and hosted over 180 male and 80 females across 2 great days of football. Both Gold Coast and Collingwood had a presence at the Cup, and we look forward to building on these programs into 2023.

#### **EVENTS**

### The 2021-22 NTFL Nichols Medal was held as an online event delivered by Dreamedia.

The decision to not proceed with the event in person was a difficult one however with COVID rampant in the community the risk to players, officials and guests prior to the Grand Final was too high of a risk. The event enabled anyone to watch the event online and celebrate what was a difficult COVID impacted season.

The NTFL finals series proceeded as planned with restrictions lifted. The final series saw over 20,000 patrons through the gates, more than previous years and an increase in revenue from the previous year. The strong support for the final's series coincided with the removal of mask requirements and showed the communities support to return to normal.

After a 1-year hiatus of AFL in the Northern Territory, 3 games were hosted across Darwin in Alice Springs. The Gold Coast SUNS immersed themselves as the Territory SUNS, becoming Territorians for 10 days. Their busy schedule saw them not only go away with 8 premiership points, from back-to-back wins, but also a visit the Tiwi Islands, Gunbalyana, various schools, tourism attractions and

attend Friends of Parliament Launch. The SUNS also brought with them a large business delegation.

The Territory SUNS took on Hawthorn in Round 11 and was attended by 7516 people; and Round 12 against North Melbourne saw more than 5500 people in attendance.

Round 12 was an opportunity to give back to the community with tickets provided to a range of frontline workers from teacher, medical and allied health staff, retail, hospital, and disability sector.

The Heart of the Nation match returned to Alice Springs in July, for Round 18 where we saw, reigning premiers Melbourne win over Port Adelaide in front of 6,312 patrons at TIO Traeger Park. Melbourne brought with them the 2021 AFL Grand Final Premiership Cup and visited a range of communities in and around Alice Springs. An exhibition game was also held at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) named, the "MCG of the desert". Melbourne hosted a contingent of staff, supporters. and sponsors in the community where members of the travelling group took on Ltyentye Apurte. It was the first time many had the opportunity to see the investment the Demons and the Melbourne Cricket Club made to improve the ground for all the community to enjoy.





#### **COMMERCIAL**



Sponsorship bounced back from a Covid impacted 2020-21 with renewed vigor from NT Businesses eager to form relationships with the AFLNT, with emphasis on regional competitions.

Post COVID the business community has embraced Football as a means to promote their brand and work collaboratively with the AFLNT for the betterment of both parties.

The AFLNT entered agreements with Sun Cable (POWERLINK) for substantial sponsorship for BRFL (Katherine) and BAFL (Tennant Creek). This allowed these regional competitions to flourish with expanded teams with exceptional growth in Women's Football.

Sponsorship for the CAFL competition showed a 21% growth in revenue. A major incentive for this increase was the AFL game schedule to be played in Alice Springs in 2022 as AFL Games in Alice Springs is contributing factor for sponsors engagement in Alice Springs.

A highlight of the year was the extension of our agreement with Cazalys Palmerston Club until 2025. Cazalys have been long term supporters of the AFLNT and significant contributor football in the Top End. Their generous support provides vital equipment and infrastructure to NTFL Clubs and the AFLNT.

We continue to receive outstanding support from our Naming Rights and Premier Partner TIO. Now in its 31st year, the partnership continues to provide significant support to Football in the NT and we greatly appreciate this ongoing support.

The AFLNT have sponsorship partnerships with 72 NT Businesses, ranging from box holders, signage, naming rights, media partners and in-kind Suppliers. Each partnership is vital to the ongoing success of Football in the NT and we are working diligently to maintain these sponsors, while exploring new and exciting partnerships.

#### **FACILITIES**

2021-22 saw several small projects undertaken across facilities across the Top End. This included the installation of a fence between TIO Oval 1 and Oval 2 to enable both ovals to function as a standalone facility in the future. Further investment is required to install an ablution block at TIO 2 for the public before this can be used to its full advantage.

Funding was secured for projects during 2021-22 to commence in 2022-23 through the Australian Football Facilities Fund of more than \$200k. This was for 3 projects to undertake planning works for facilities. This included a Venue Improvement Plan for Garden's Oval and Cazalys Oval; and a needs assessment on behalf of AFLNT to determine future participation numbers and the facilities needed to support this growth. These projects have commenced and will be finalised next financial year. In addition to this, funding was made available for rectification works at Cazalys (New goal posts, upgrade of venue (not oval) lighting to increase energy efficiency and installation of air-conditioning timers) and a contribution towards a new scoreboard.

To support the need for additional facilities, funding was secured for O'Loughlin College to support their project (along with other investors) to develop their oval in honour of Michael Bowden. Funding provided included for the installation of goals posts and funding for a venue improvement plan.

A contribution of \$250k was also secured through the AFFF for Woodroffe Oval. This oval is currently not used for AFL, only cricket (Palmerston Cricket Club). A Venue Improvement Plan is being finalised by Michael Bodman – Inside Edge, to develop the oval into a shared AFL and Cricket venue including club amenities. AFLNT continues to advocate for further funding for this project.

#### **MLLLC**

The Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre experienced a slow start to 2021-22 with COVID-19 restrictions limiting travel of students from remote communities and other interstate user groups. Once restrictions were lifted the centre welcomed various groups in the accommodation over the year and students returned in Term 3 2022. The lecture theatre and other meeting rooms were booked by private user groups, Government Departments and Larrakia Nation to support their seniors' group.

The Gym and recovery centre was utilized by Talent, visiting local football clubs and hosted teams competing in the NBL Blitz and the NBL1 Team, Darwin Salties.

As the building continues to age maintenance costs have increased with a major repair required to the air-conditioning system this year on top of increasing day to day repairs. To compensate the increasing costs commercial opportunities for the centre will be a focus in 2022-23 with revenue to be re-invested into the centre.



# COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL



Despite the COVID-19 challenges presented early in 2022, it was another successful year of substantial audience growth and increased engagement across the media landscape in the Northern Territory.

A continued key focus for the Digital and Comms team was promoting AFLNT both locally and nationally through its associated programs and strategy. Community footy seasons continued and were completed, with minimal COVID impact for the first time since 2020

The partnership between AFLNT and ICTV continued to grow, which saw the TIO CAFL Central Desert Community preliminary and grand finals broadcast live into remote communities as well as Alice Springs and

other Indigenous towns via ICTV, these broadcast matches attracted over 44,000 views across the two weeks, on streaming platforms alone. The streams broadcast via ICTV and via the AFLNTv YouTube Channel ensured it was accessible to watch both nationally and internationally.

Throughout 2022, AFLNT continued to package feature stories for AFL.com.au, Womens.afl, Yokayi Footy and Channel 7. From wrap up segments on the 2021-22 TIO NTFL Finals Series, during their 'State Scoop", to a complete wrap up of the double header AFL Premiership Matches in Darwin and Alice Springs.

In addition to NTFL broadcast arrangements, AFLNT and NITV partnered on the 2022 TIFL Grand Final between Imalu Tigers vs Muluwurri Magpies, broadcast live from Wurrumiyanga Oval, with the AFLNTv YouTube stream viewed over 12.000 times. After massive success in its inaugural year, AFLNT and the NT News came together for the second season in a partnership to live stream Men's Premier League games for the 2021-22 TIO NTFL season, long-term broadcast partner, ABC Radio Darwin continued to broadcast one match per round, and NITV came on board to broadcast one Women's Premier League game per round to a national audience post-Christmas break. Numbers post season reflected, total views for the season at 143,398, with an average of 1,103 viewers per game.

The Digital and Comms team continued to deliver high-quality content for fans of all ages. All platforms experienced consistent audience growth from 2021 with a reach of over 1.3 million on the AFL Northern Territory Facebook page, up 31.8 per cent on 2021, and an increase of 2,993 followers year on year,

and an increased total of 13,800 followers on Instagram.

The popular AFL Footy Focus amateur photography competition returned in 2021-22, and featured multiple NT based photographers, with the winning photo won by Melbourne-based photographer whose outstanding shot of Lee Munungurr engulfed in Gopu's team huddle encapsulates everything we love about footy: mateship, camaraderie, community, and connection. Bernie Wright captured the reverent moment at the Gove Australian Football League's match between Gopu and Nguykal at Nhulunbuy Town Oval in Northern Territory's north-east Arnhem Land, his childhood home. Munungurr plays for Gopu, who went on to win the GAFL premiership this year.





# AFLNT FINANCIAL REPORT

Year Ended 31 October 2022

The audited financial statements of AFL Northern Territory Limited, for the year ended 31 October 2022 are attached for your perusal and adoption at this meeting.

The notes below should be read in conjunction with the Financial Accounts to understand the organisation's financial affairs.

#### **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Company has recorded a statutory profit of \$38,798 for the year ended 31st October 2022, which has increased the retained profits to \$150,855.

Key financial results for the 2022 Financial Year included:

- Overall revenues increased by \$0.7m largely due to commercial and government revenues derived from hosting three AFL matches.
- 2. Accordingly, operating expenses increased by \$0.7m to enable match day costs, event costs and game development.
- 3. The AFL continues to provide AFLNT with financial backing through State grant funding of \$2.39m (up from \$2.04m in 2021).
- There was a continued focus on renewing and retaining key government and corporate support for our Remote Programs.

Given the challenges once again faced across the AFL industry in 2021, this is a pleasing result and all staff of AFLNT should be congratulated.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The AFLNT would again this year like to thank our ongoing and loyal sponsors and supporters, the AFL for their guidance and support and to the NT and Federal Governments a big thank you for your ongoing contribution to AFL Football in the NT. To our many other AFLNT, MLLLC and Affiliated Leagues, Club sponsors and supporters we appreciate all your support.

#### **MOTION OF ACCEPTANCE**

It is my pleasure, to move the adoption of the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Statement of Financial Position, in conjunction with the notes and Auditors Report for the year ended 31 October 2022.

5. Bouden

Sean Bowden Chairman – AFL Northern Territory

#### STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	4	9,176,557	8,484,960
Expenses from operating activities	5	(9,137,759)	(8,475,281)
Net Profit/(Loss) for the year	_	38,798	9,679
Other comprehensive income for the period		-	-
Total comprehensive loss for the year	_	38,798	9,679

#### **STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2022**

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	13(a)	26,776	3,475
Trade and other receivables	6	2,210,155	1,832,732
Other assets		34,757	11,757
Total current assets		2,271,687	1,847,964
Total assets		2,271,687	1,847,964
Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	540,116	339,216
Provisions	10	144,000	-
Deferred income		1,436,717	1,396,692
Total current liabilities		2,120,833	1,735,908
Total liabilities		2,120,833	1,735,908
Net assets		150,855	112,056
Equity			
Retained earnings	12	150,855	112,056
Total equity		150,855	112,056

#### AFL NORTHERN TERRITORY WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING KEY CORPORATE PARTNERS FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT

#### PREMIER PARTNERS











#### **CORPORATE PARTNERS**

























#### **OFFICIAL SPONSORS**





















#### **PREFERRED SUPPLIERS**















































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