



**PLAY**

# **LEAD YOUR WAY**

**2026 NATIONAL PROGRAM GUIDE**

**APPLICATIONS OPEN: 1 DEC 2025  
APPLICATIONS CLOSE: 30 JAN 2026**

# LEAD YOUR WAY 2026

Lead Your Way 2026 is calling on women and gender-diverse leaders in community football to elevate your skills, grow your network, and make your mark this season.

If you're a current committee level volunteer at a Community Football Club, League or Umpire Association this program is designed for you. Engage in a dynamic mix of online and in-person events led by expert facilitators and football industry leaders. From interactive webinars to hands-on workshops, capped off with a celebratory end of program event, Lead Your Way is your opportunity to build confidence, strengthen leadership, and kick goals on and off the field.

Applications for the 2026 program close at 11:59 PM AEDT on Friday 30th January 2026. Read on for all the details and get ready to Lead Your Way.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3	About the program/ program schedule
Page 4	2025 Testimonials
Page 5	Eligibility criteria - who can apply
	Diversity
	Frequently asked questions
Page 6	Selection criteria
	Contact information
Page 7	How to apply
	Apply now
	Key dates

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Lead Your Way is designed to strengthen the leadership capabilities of women and gender-diverse individuals through a dynamic series of development and networking events. Now entering its third year, the program has built a thriving alumni community of over 1,000 participants across Australia.

Regardless of your state or territory, Lead Your Way offers a consistent and high-quality experience, with tailored elements to reflect local needs and contexts.

In 2026, states & territories will deliver Lead Your Way to support volunteers currently holding leadership roles within community football clubs, leagues or umpiring groups. The program is specifically designed for senior leaders operating at committee, board, or executive levels.

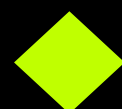
Running from March through to October, the program schedule will be shared with successful applicants as dates are confirmed.

## PROGRAM FORMAT

The program is a mix of in-person and online activities which includes:

- A launch event
- Online education webinars
- A state based in person conference
- A National webinar
- A Celebration & Networking event

## THE PROGRAM SCHEDULE



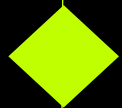
**MARCH 2026**  
Program launch and meet and greet event for 2026 new participants.



**APRIL 2026**  
First online webinar: program introduction, topic TBC for 2026 participants and LYW alumni.



**JUNE 2026**  
Lead Your Way Conference. In person education, development and networking for 2026 participants.



**JULY 2026**  
National webinar: Women's Coaching Month + Navigating the football environment for 2026 participants and LYW alumni



**AUGUST 2026**  
Second online webinar: topic TBC for 2026 participants and LYW alumni



**OCTOBER 2026**  
Lead Your Way in person celebration event



## WORDS FROM OUR 2025 PARTICIPANTS

*The Lead Your Way program has connected me to likeminded female leaders across WA footy. In particular, the program has allowed me to development my leadership capabilities through access to specialised recourses and programs.*

**Carly Sutton**  
West Perth WAFLW



*Participating in Lead Your Way strengthened my confidence and capacity to collaborate with purpose. Surrounded by driven, like-minded women leaders, I felt truly supported and inspired. This experience has empowered me to pursue future growth opportunities both professionally and personally, lead boldly and uplift others with intention.*

**Steph Jones - Secretary**  
South Gambier, Limestone Coast Leagues, SA

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To participate in the program, applicants must:

- Identify as a woman or gender diverse
- Be over the age of 18 & reside within the State/ Territory of application
- Hold a current leadership position as a committee volunteer within a community football club or umpire association, or be a future committee volunteer as part of succession planning

## **DIVERSITY**

The program seeks a diverse cohort to ensure an intersectional approach to leadership within club communities, and to support the goals of inclusive and diverse environments as included in the AFL Women and Girls Action plan.

This includes but is not limited to people identifying as:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Culturally and/or religiously diverse people
- LGBTIQ+
- People from rural and regional communities
- People with disabilities.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

If your questions are not answered throughout this document, please visit the Lead Your Way landing page for more information. Alternatively, reach out to the team (contact details on page 5)



## SELECTION CRITERIA

In your application, you will be asked to share information on the following:

- General information
- Your community football club
- A key contact/ reference from your club to endorse
- Your leadership position
- Why you are interested in the program
- What you hope to gain from participating in the program

Your application responses should show:

- Your leadership experience in community sport
- Why you want to be a part of this program
- Your personal leadership goals/what you want to achieve through Lead Your Way
- Consideration for how this program can lead to positive improvement

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For further details about the Women & Girls Action Plan:

[AFL Club Help: Women & Girls](#)

Ashleigh Brennan  
National Women & Girls Experience Lead  
[ashleigh.brennan@afl.com.au](mailto:ashleigh.brennan@afl.com.au)

## HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the program details, including eligibility, selection criteria, and key dates, to assess their suitability and availability to participate in the scheduled sessions.

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM AEDT on Friday, 30 January 2026.

The selection panel will assess applications as they are received and may seek feedback or endorsement from relevant staff within your state. In some cases, applicants or their referees may be contacted to provide further information.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome via email no later than Tuesday 24th February 2026.

# APPLY NOW

[APPLICATION FORM](#)

## KEY DATES



Applications open: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025

Applications close: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Applicants notified: Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026



**PLAY.AFL**