



PLAY

Women & Girls Umpire Liaison: Position Description

NATIONAL 2026



Background

In 2024, the *Women & Girls Umpire Liaison Program* was established to strengthen community umpiring environments across Australia, with a dedicated focus on improving retention and support for women and girls in officiating roles. Recognising the need for targeted initiatives to foster inclusivity and belonging, the program was designed to embed Umpire Liaisons within local umpiring groups, creating a visible, accessible point of connection for female umpires.

Initially piloted in Victoria with a goal of placing Liaisons in all 27 Umpire Groups, the program quickly gained momentum. Its success led to a national rollout, ensuring consistent support and resources across all States and Territories.

Since its inception, the program has grown from 66 Liaisons in 2024 to 79 in 2025, reflecting its expanding reach and impact.

The Program

PURPOSE
<p>The <i>Women & Girls Umpire Liaison Program</i> was created to foster gender-balanced leadership and build inclusive, safe pathways for women in community umpiring. Its core mission is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase visibility and representation of women and girls in umpiring roles• Enhance the overall experience and retention of women & girl umpires• Empower liaisons with the tools, training, and support to influence positive cultural change• Promote connection, mentorship, and role modelling within umpiring groups• Ensure inclusive leadership practices are embedded across all levels of community officiating <p>This program is not just about participation, it's about transformation. It equips women with the confidence and capability to lead, support, and advocate for others in their umpiring communities.</p>
AUDIENCE
<p>The program is designed for women and non-binary umpires involved in community umpiring groups across Australia. Eligible participants must be registered on Officials HQ in one or more of the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Umpire• Women & Girls Liaison• Coach• Mentor <p>Importantly, participants do not need to be active umpires. What matters most is a demonstrated commitment to leadership and a passion for creating a positive, inclusive environment for all umpires, regardless of gender, experience level, or background.</p>
WHAT'S INVOLVED
<p>Participants will have six opportunities to connect with the broader network of liaisons throughout the year, through a mix of virtual and in-person engagements:</p> <p>Connection Opportunities</p>

- National virtual meetings: Bringing together liaisons from across the country to share insights, challenges, and successes while upskilling with subject matter experts
- State-based meetings: Focused on local context, collaboration, and community-specific initiatives, linking in with State/Territory Leads for support
- In-person gatherings: Facilitating deeper relationships and a match day experience if possible

Expert-Led Sessions

Each meeting will feature a subject matter expert presenting on topics designed to upskill, inspire, and empower participants in their roles. Topics may include:

- Leadership & confidence
- Child Safeguarding and Integrity
- Health & wellbeing
- Inclusive environments
- Q&A panel

Key Responsibilities

A Women & Girls Umpire Liaison is a proactive leader who is passionate about creating a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment for all umpires, especially women and girls. They play a vital role in fostering connection, promoting visibility, and championing gender balance within their umpiring group.

The Women & Girls Umpire Liaisons will:

- Be a visible role model who inspires confidence and participation among women and girls
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusive leadership and cultural safety
- Actively engage with coaches, umpire managers, and fellow umpires to share ideas and advocate for positive change
- Support initiatives that improve the experience, development, and retention of women and girls in umpiring
- Communicate effectively and respectfully across diverse groups, ensuring safe communication with umpires under 18
- Bring energy, empathy, and initiative to their role as a connector and change-maker

You don't need to be an umpire to apply, just someone who leads with purpose and is committed to building a more inclusive future for umpiring.

Submission Criteria

It is a requirement that the Umpire Liaison:

1. Be registered on Officials HQ as either an umpire, mentor, coach or umpire liaison
2. Be over the age of 18
3. Has a good relationship and maintains communication with leadership at the umpire group

It's not a requirement; however, it is preferred and encouraged that the Umpire Liaison:

1. Attended monthly online meetings
2. Have 2 check ins with umpires in season (mid and end) to gather feedback and provide support
3. Ensure new umpires feel welcome and receive onboarding information

4. Attend 1-2 committee meetings to share feedback and insights
5. Share upcoming National and S/T programs and initiatives with umpires
6. Attend Experience Hubs

Details

Monthly Webex meetings will commence from 2 March 2026 and dates of follow up meetings will be available shortly.

- Please download the Webex app
- Accept meeting invitations which will include the link to join the meetings
- Meetings will be recorded and shared to all participants
- March and April will occur at 7.30PM AEDST
- May-August will occur at 7.30PM AEST
- Please communicate your attendance prior to the meeting
- \$1500 honorarium

While we do encourage for Liaisons to attend all sessions, we understand that people have commitments and may not be able to attend.

Umpire Manager and Coach Expectations

- Endorse the assigned role
- Introduce W&G Umpire Liaison to broader group, coaches and committee at the beginning of the season
- Involve the W&G Umpire Liaison in 1-2 committee meetings to provide feedback and insights
- For final submissions, W&G & Umpiring Leads must endorse applicant and understand ways they can support the program
- Make payment to the umpire liaison in 3 instalments:
 - March 2026: \$500
 - July 2026: \$500
 - September 2026: \$500
- Failure to make these payments will impact future funding towards the program

Support and lines of communication

National Women & Girls Experience Lead is responsible for the program and requires the support from the following teams when supporting Liaisons:

- S/T Women & Girls Experience Lead/coordinator
- S/T Umpiring Recruitment & Retention Lead
- S/T Umpiring Education & Support/coordinator
- Umpire Manager
- Umpire Coach

Funding allocation

The AFL is thrilled to announce the availability of \$1500 which is paid directly to the S/T or Umpire Group and is then transferred to the Umpire Liaison as an honorarium payment via Officials HQ. This once off payment is to fund one Umpire Liaison and is split in the occurrence that the role is a shared position.

How to apply

1. Current Women & Girls Umpire Liaisons will be sent the application form directly if they have expressed interest in continuing in the role for 2026.
2. It is preferred that the Liaison complete the application form demonstrating their interest in the role
3. If an umpire manager would prefer to nominate a liaison, please discuss this position with them prior
4. Complete the form by the 30th January 2026

If you have any questions relating to the program, please reach out to National Women & Girls Experience Lead – Ashleigh Brennan via email: ashleigh.brennan@afl.com.au

Application submission process:

1. Review submission criteria
2. Complete application link: [2026 W&G Umpire Liaison application](#)
3. Await decision, announced mid-February



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