

# 2026 TOYOTA AFL National Volunteers of the Year Awards & Criteria

(14 categories. Applications open on Monday 6 April 2026 & close Monday 6 July 2026 at 11.59pm EST)

Each National award recognises outstanding work by an individual positively impacting community football as it particularly relates to their category. States & Territories (“S/T’s”) may have additional awards to the ones below:

**Relevant requirements for all nominations to be eligible for nomination:**

- A person may not nominate more than one individual for each category
- Nominees must meet relevant Working with Children screening requirements as relevant within their State / Territory
- Volunteers are allowed to have received an honorarium. N.B.: Paid coaches are eligible to be nominated for the 2 x coaching awards
- Previous winners of the National award are ineligible to be nominated for that award for a period of at least 3 years

**In addition to meeting the key criteria to be eligible to be nominated, the following criteria will be used to assess nominations for each specific category;**

## 1. TOYOTA AFL Community Volunteer of the Year

- ✓ Must have given notable voluntary service with a community football club, league &/or region
- ✓ Must be an Ambassador for the game at community football level, who acts and works for the best interest of the game in general without ever bringing the game in to disrepute
- ✓ Initiatives that the individual has led / advocated for to progress the game will be highly regarded – examples might include a focus on: *club culture / behaviour, inclusivity, volunteer / player retention, participation growth, club sustainability, community connection etc.*
- ✓ The length of service will be looked upon favourably, however impact of service is a higher priority

## 2. TOYOTA AFL Young Leader of the Year

- ✓ Must be 25 years of age (or younger) as at the date of being nominated
- ✓ Balance of criteria in line with “Toyota AFL Community Volunteer of the Year” criteria

## 3. TOYOTA AFL Community Club of the Year

- ✓ No more than one club from each league can be nominated for consideration at S/T level
- ✓ A club cannot be nominated by more than one league
- ✓ Where a league or S/T does not have prescribed criteria already in place to determine their Club of the Year winner, the following guidance should be used for nominations
- ✓ The club has introduced multiple initiatives in recent years/months that has led to it being well regarded throughout the league / region as the current benchmark club for any/all of:

<b>Inclusivity</b>	<i>gender, ability, background etc</i>
<b>Behavioural standards</b>	<i>officials, players &amp; spectators</i>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<i>recruitment, retention, reward, recognition</i>
<b>Players</b>	<i>retention of players from Auskick to Juniors &amp;/or Juniors to Seniors</i>

<b>Education / compliance</b>	<i>meeting or exceeding state, territory &amp;/or league accreditation, education and compliance requirements e.g. coaches, safeguarding etc.</i>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<i>solutions to positively impact club sustainability e.g. governance, financial</i>
<b>Community</b>	<i>adding exceptional value to the wider community</i>
<b>Creativity / innovation</b>	<i>other solutions introduced by the club that benefit the game</i>

#### **4. NAB AFL Auskick Volunteer of the Year**

- ✓ Promotes NAB AFL Auskick values of fun, inclusion and enthusiasm
- ✓ Volunteers on a consistent basis and shows excellent initiative in helping deliver awesome experiences for participants
- ✓ Actively promotes other parents and carers to become involved in the NAB AFL Auskick community.
- ✓ Effectively communicates with relevant stakeholders including participants, other volunteers, community figures, AFL staff

#### **5. AFL Disability Inclusion Ambassador of the Year**

- ✓ Shows leadership and innovation with the purpose of engaging more people with disability into the game
- ✓ Mentoring of new volunteers, players and/or club members
- ✓ Promoting a healthy club/league/program culture which provides an inclusive environment
- ✓ Drives social change by being an advocate for people with disability

#### **6. AFL Diversity National Ambassador of the Year**

- ✓ Support pathways for multicultural and/or Indigenous participants to play, coach or umpire in our game
- ✓ Promote AFL to multicultural and/or Indigenous communities, including cultural festivals and AFL match day experiences
- ✓ Provide the AFL with advice around best practice to work with Multicultural and/or Indigenous groups
- ✓ Promote a healthy club/league culture which provides a fair, safe and inclusive environment for all

#### **7. AFL National Community Umpiring Service Award**

- ✓ Must have given notable umpiring service with an umpire club, league or region (or any combination thereof) within community football as an umpire or umpire coach
- ✓ Must be an Ambassador for umpiring at the community football level, who acts and works in the best interest of the game in general without ever bringing the game in to disrepute
- ✓ Must provide a positive impact on umpiring at their local level which may include umpire membership, financial viability, new programs implemented, increasing diversity and inclusion etc
- ✓ Is a proactive and positive contributor to both the umpiring and football community and is aligned with the AFL's values and umpiring strategies

#### **8. AFL National Community Football Media Award**

- ✓ Must have provided regular quality reporting / storytelling about community football – at region, league &/or club level
- N.B.: Entries will be judged on insight into football, depth of discussion / feature writing, quality of analysis and impact. Submissions can be across any form of media – including print, digital, radio,*

TV, streaming, social media. Three examples of published work from the previous 12 months to be submitted.

### **9. AFL National Community Football Photography Award**

- ✓ Must have had at least three separate examples of your work published (e.g. newspaper, magazine, website, on-line) that celebrate local footy highlights, people, emotion and great moments

*N.B.: Three examples of published work from the previous 12 months to be submitted.*

### **10 & 11. AFL Community Coaches of the Year\* (N.B.: Both Women & Men categories - 2 Awards)**

- ✓ Must be an accredited member of CoachAFL in good standing
- ✓ Must have a current coaching role in either a head coach, assistant coach or club coaching coordinator/director capacity
- ✓ Must display and foster respect for umpires, opponents, coaches, administrators, officials, parents and spectators and be a role model for community
- ✓ Must demonstrate sound understanding of modern coaching principles and is engaged in ongoing learning and development

### **12. AFL Schools – Teacher of the Year**

- ✓ Actively promotes Australian Rules Football both on and off field within the school community
- ✓ Uses creative initiatives to encourage diverse participation in Australian Rules Football - playing, umpiring, club/brand engagement
- ✓ Engages with AFL schools' products, competitions and initiatives
- ✓ Promotes AFL values of inclusion, leadership, teamwork as endorsed by their school principal
- ✓ All nominees must be a registered school member via [AFL Schools Membership](#)

### **13. AFL Schools – School of the Year**

- ✓ Selected from schools within 'Hall of Fame' Membership Tier
- ✓ Strong engagement with the game evident throughout the school
- ✓ Members of the school community have gone above and beyond to promote the game
- ✓ Strong relationship established with relevant AFL S/T body

### **14. AFL Superkick Volunteer of the Year Award**

- ✓ Champions the NAB AFL Superkick values of fun, inclusion, and confidence building.
- ✓ Consistently volunteers and demonstrates outstanding initiative in creating engaging experiences for participants.
- ✓ Encourages other parents and carers to get involved in the NAB AFL Superkick community.
- ✓ Effectively communicates with relevant stakeholders including participants, fellow volunteers, community leaders, and AFL staff