

NATIONAL COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER ACTION PLAN

2026 - 2028



PLAY



The AFL acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and play our game. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge we play our great game on this land and respect the cultures of all First Peoples, their contribution to our nation and contribution to the game of Australian Rules Football.

BACKGROUND

The National Community Club & Volunteer Action Plan has been developed to ensure the support and guidance provided to community clubs aligns with their needs. More than 2,200 community clubs support over 393,000 local footy participants each year.

Community clubs are largely volunteer-run, with volunteers playing a critical role across both match-day and off-field operations. Led by club committees, they underpin sustainability by generating revenue and managing costs, including affiliation and competition fees, umpiring, league operations, salary caps, facilities, and day-to-day expenses.

A strong club committee is essential to recruiting and retaining volunteers, ensuring smooth match-day delivery, maintaining good governance, and fostering a positive club culture. Ultimately, the quality of club operations and environment has a direct impact on participant experience, retention, and growth.

This plan focuses on strengthening community football clubs to deliver better participant experiences by building volunteer capability, simplifying processes, and improving access to resources, support, and facilities. It also aims to future-proof the network through innovation and stronger connections, ultimately growing and retaining a capable volunteer base and enabling sustainable, inclusive, and high-performing clubs.

Community football thrives thanks to volunteers, though growing complexity means we need to find better ways to support these vital roles.



VISION STATEMENT

To make volunteer roles easier, increasing capability to deliver high-quality, inclusive, and enjoyable environments.

INCREASED VOLUNTEER BASE TO SUPPORT CLUB OPERATIONS



Volunteering is attractive and accessible, reflecting the club and its community with the support of a diverse network.

INCREASED RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers thrive with supportive culture, consistent endorsement and meaningful recognition.

ENHANCED VOLUNTEER CAPABILITY



Volunteers possess the skills and confidence needed to deliver an excellent experience.

IMPROVED CLUB ENVIRONMENTS



Ensuring a club's culture is safe and inclusive resulting in the best possible community environments.

KEY INITIATIVES

INCREASED VOLUNTEER BASE TO SUPPORT CLUB OPERATIONS	INCREASED RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS	ENHANCED VOLUNTEER CAPABILITY	IMPROVED CLUB ENVIRONMENTS
» Strengthen volunteer attraction through clear, accessible messaging and tools for clubs. » Improve volunteer onboarding by developing engaging and consistent induction approaches. » Support clubs to grow their volunteer base and increase participation. » Explore opportunities to better recognise and reward volunteers across the network.	» Use insights to better target and deliver volunteer support to clubs. » Explore digital solutions to streamline club operations and improve efficiency across the network. » Increase visibility and recognition of volunteers at a national level. » Strengthen volunteer capability through focused and accessible learning opportunities.	» Provide accessible learning to support effective club operations. » Ensure clear, consistent, and compliant policy and resource frameworks. » Deliver targeted expertise to support clubs with specific development needs. » Improve visibility and connection with volunteers to better support them. » Strengthen workforce capability to better enable and support clubs.	» Leverage storytelling to highlight and share best practice across the network. » Promote key programs and initiatives to drive awareness and uptake. » Support clubs to access funding and improve financial and facility outcomes. » Use consistent insights to identify gaps and better target club support.



 play.afl/clubhelp