



Northern Tasmanian Football Association Inc.

UTAS Stadium, 2-4 Invermay Road, Invermay, Tasmania, 7248
ABN: 36 739 494 892



Important update for clubs

29th September 2026

Now that the season has drawn to a close and planning is underway for 2027, I would like to share with you the key messages that we received back from clubs in the recent survey.

Whilst most clubs acknowledged that player and volunteer numbers continue to be challenging, all clubs believe that they are sustainable into the future.

Most clubs indicated that they were impacted by increasing regulation and 'red tape' including local council, licensing, AFL Tas or NTFA requirements.

There was broad acknowledgment that strong junior pathways through to senior football to support the next generation of senior players was critical.

Volunteer recruitment, training and support was also a key theme.

The majority of clubs supported a three division model.

A key theme was the need for better roster alignment across under 18.5's and women's teams so that 4 team clubs weren't playing games at multiple venues on the same weekend.

There was also a strong view that the women's roster should provide for the stronger teams to compete more regularly, whilst developing teams should compete against teams of a similar standard to ensure a more competitive game for the participants.

In terms of player numbers and whilst a number of clubs were supportive of mergers, no club believed it should be them that merged and likewise with the option of recess.

It was suggested we should manage the current player shortage in men's reserves by playing 16 on the field with up to 4 interchange players to keep all clubs going in 2027.

Of note as well, since the surveys were returned, the finals campaign was very successful, with crowds up more than 20% and also that in recent weeks AFL Tas have announced growth in junior player numbers is running two years ahead of schedule.

This clearly indicates that as we see more of the Devils in Launceston in 2027 and beyond participation rates will continue to increase positively strengthening our longer term future.

With the growth in crowds and juniors better than expected the NTFA has decided to target growth, focus on retaining young people in the game and attracting back former players to address our player shortage.





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We will announce our final position in coming weeks but will not be progressing with mergers or club recess, and I want to share with you our thinking on the broad framework around how we will take the NTFA forward in the coming years.

There will be three divisions going forward.

We will refocus our marketing efforts to assist clubs over the summer to attract players who for whatever reason have left the game to return.

In terms of red tape and regulation we will review our processes and streamline where we can but importantly provide training for volunteers on systems and IT that can benefit your club and make their job easier.

We want to expand the Premier league further as quickly as possible so that better alignment with U18.5's and women's teams can occur minimizing the disruption for clubs, players and volunteers.

This will keep more players and people in the game and provide the future supply of players needed over time for a strong Division one and two.

We will be discussing this with clubs who have U/18's and women's teams during the first week of October with a view to beginning that expansion in 2027 if possible, but definitely by 2028 as previously announced.

As clubs move over time up to Premier League there will be an obvious change to the clubs in Division One.

As such the Division One and Two promotion and relegation model will be set aside, and clubs will remain in the same division they are now for 2027.

We will retain our current 10 team u/18.5 model for the foreseeable future and ensure that where necessary we clarify the alignment between junior and senior clubs who have an U18.5 team.

The women's competition will see a gradual transition of teams from Division one to Premier League as clubs move up but will remain a two division model.

As we transition to a larger premier league aligned model we will work with clubs with women's programs to ensure that the opportunity to play our game remains available.

To underpin these changes there will be some changes we are finalising to better manage player registration, as well as player numbers across men's reserves, and we are working through the details which will be announced to clubs in coming weeks.

We will hold a council meeting following that announcement to take you all through the changes.

I will do my best to speak with you all before then but please feel free to call me directly should you wish to discuss any matter.

Regards

Peter Gutwein

NTFA President

