



**Australian Gridiron Officials Association  
AGM 2022  
Directors Report**

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022

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## Executive Summary

This report provides a review of the year and has been compiled by the Board of Directors and the CEO.

The 2021/22 year saw the return to football for most of the state leagues. Unfortunately, the continued effects of the COVID outbreak in NSW saw their season cancelled yet again. Following the heavy impact of COVID on the 2020/21 seasons it was encouraging to see the overall return to play, though it was noted that the participation level was much lower than pre-COVID seasons.

The Board of Directors for the 2021/22 year were:

Greg Evers (NSW), Harley Johnston (QLD), Paul Mercer (VIC), Miles Newman (ACT), Shane Oset (ACT), Pamela Tuft (WA)

At the 2021 AGM there were two nominations received for the open positions on the AGOA board. These were received from Greg Evers and Paul Mercer and as such they were re-appointed to the board.

With an open director position available, the AGOA board received an EOI from Harley Johnston and were pleased to appoint Harley as a director on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021, under the casual vacancy clause in the AGOA constitution. Harley's term of appointment will expire at the 2023 AGM.

The following directors have terms expiring in the year 2022:

1. Miles Newman
2. Shane Oset
3. Pamela Tuft

AGOA Operations:

Secretary – Brian Harwood

CEO – Paul Taylor

Treasurer – Mathew Peterson

Chairperson – Pamela Tuft

Training – Miles Newman

Rules & Mechanics – Paul Mercer

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Brian Harwood resigned from the Secretary's position. Brian continues to assist AGOA as the noted public officer of the association. The AGOA board would like to thank Brian for his service to AGOA throughout his time as Secretary and to Tony Connor for assisting in a temporary role following Brian's resignation. The Secretary position remains unfilled at the time of the AGM and the AGOA board would love to hear from any individuals who feel that can assist the association in this role.

Following the 2021 AGM and Mathew Peterson's end of term as a director, Mat also confirmed his intention to resign as the AGOA Treasurer. The past year AGOA sought a new Treasurer and are grateful to Andrew Calverley for accepting this role. Regretfully, there have been significant delays in updating our banking authorities and this transition is still a work in progress. We would like to acknowledge and thank Mathew for his ongoing service to AGOA in the Treasurer role whilst the board works through the required updates.

## **Introduction**

This report will provide an overview of the operations and achievements of AGOA throughout the financial year of the association. The financial reporting period for the AGM is 01/03/21 – 28/02/22. The directors report to members will cover the AGOA financial year 2021/22 and the period since the previous AGM.

As an outline to members, this report details of the operations including governance, member communications, and rules and mechanics. The financial report will be included with the Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet provided as an appendix to the report.

## **Governance**

In this period, the following governance documents were created:

- AGOA Code of Conduct for the Board of Directors
- Complaint Handling Policy for AGOA Officials

These documents are available on the AGO website.

## **Complaint Handling**

Some complaints have been received. These are being managed by the CEO and are still under review. The CEO apologises for the delay in evaluating and completing these complaints.

## Member Communications

Courtney Scarth is working with the Board and CEO as the major driver for AGOA media and communications.

In this period, Courtney has achieved:

- The establishment of AGOA's Instagram @ausgridironofficials
- Increased posts on AGOA's Facebook pages as well as more graphical content
  - <https://www.facebook.com/aus.gridiron.officials>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1684190805176480>
- Redesign of the website - <https://www.ago.org.au/> - currently delayed due to access and handover challenges

Officiating related questions were added to the Gridiron Australia Members Survey. The survey has recently closed and AGOA is working with GA to evaluate the data and findings.

AGOA has drafted a survey to poll officiating issues from members. This will be released after this AGM.

## Hall of Fame

The 2021 AGOA Hall of Fame inductee was John Frame from Victoria. The details of John's nomination are outlined below.

John's on field career includes:

- 544 career games 1992-2000 & 2003-2019
- 30 National-level games (3 as R @ Jnr Nats) including,
  - 2 x Snr Men's Championship Game (1996 - F, 2008 - U)
  - 2010 Snr Nats 3rd/4th place play-off (L)
  - 2011 Jnr Nats 3rd/4th place play-off (L)
- 13 Vic Bowl assignments
- 5 Div 2 Championship assignments (3 as Referee)
- 3 Women's Vic Bowl assignments
- 9 U19 Vic Bowl assignments (3 as Referee)
- Recipient of the VGOA President's Trophy in 2014 as the 'Most improved' official

Off field John has made a significant contribution to the sport in Victoria and the VGOA.

John has served as Secretary, Vice-President and Treasurer on various VGOA Committees and has taken a lead role in developing and enhancing the relationship between officials, the teams and Gridiron Victoria.

John has also acted as an assigned mentor for new officials and actively supports the development of his fellow VGOA Officials.

Congratulations again to John on his induction. 2022 Hall of Fame nominations will be called for in late 2022 with a due date for submissions to the CEO by 31<sup>st</sup> December.

## **Rules & Mechanics by Paul Mercer**

### **Rules and Mechanics**

Although all states continued or restarted competition during the last 12 months, the lower participation levels observed were also reflected by lower officiating numbers in some areas. The uncertainty caused by COVID, coupled with the lack of national competition, led to reduced engagement across all areas of officiating and with this in mind, the aim over the last 12 months has been to simply maintain a 'watching brief' and give people the chance to have a break and recharge the batteries for the post-COVID period.

### ***Tackle Football***

The proposed 2022 playing rules, incorporating the IFAF rule changes plus local variations, were submitted to the GA Board and have subsequently been ratified, distributed to the various GOA's and posted to the AGOA T&D FB group and website. The COVID-19 considerations remain in place for this year.

It should be noted that GV sought and obtained approval from GA to use the 2022 rules in its delayed 2021 season (played earlier this year) to avoid coaches, players and officials having to adapt to two rule sets in the same calendar year.

During the year, GA also ratified the '9 on 9' variations document. Whilst it would be desirable to also have a standard national '7 on 7' rule set, the ad hoc nature of this size game does not make this a high priority at this time.

### ***Flag Football (by Mark Looi)***

With the increasing participation in flag football, and the heightened push by GA to lift the interest, coordination and standardisation of flag football in Australia, there has been an associated lift in activity around flag football rules and officiating mechanics.

IFAF 2021 Flag Football rules were published and adopted by GA as the rule set to be used moving forward, with a view towards Australia's participation at international IFAF events. This rule set was adopted at the first GA sanctioned national flag tournament in Coffs Harbour in June 2022, which posed some operational difficulties as most local and club flag leagues run in Australia to date have been using the NFL Flag rule set. However, all local club and league coordinators whom I have spoken with at, and subsequent to the tournament, have agreed to adopt the IFAF rule set by 1 January 2023.

A basic introduction to IFAF flag football rules and officiating was developed prior to the Coffs Harbour event, and made available to all clubs, plus delivered as an online training session to representatives from each participating club. A proposed formal accreditation structure aligned with the existing AGOA Full Contact officiating accreditation scheme has been developed, and discussions are currently in place with the NZAFF for alignment between Australia and New Zealand.

The development of flag officiating and flag officiating mechanics proves to be an ongoing challenge, with almost all officiating being conducted by players. With the increasingly large number of games, and the lack of flag officials, this is a problem that will not be easily solved in the short-term. Consequently, the development of a short 'officiating basics' module is a priority for 2022.

## **Rules Advisory Panel**

As a result of the ongoing impact of COVID on participation levels, there has been no movement on this from GA. I recently revisited this concept with Shaun Dove (GA Chairman), providing him with an outline of its composition, purpose and modus operandi.

Shaun gave 'in principle' support to the concept and said he would endeavour to move it forward.

## **International Activity**

### ***Tackle Football***

In Nov 2021, I was nominated by GA for appointment to the tackle football subgroup of the IFAF Global Rules Committee. At the time of writing, it appears that IFAF have still not made any decision on the composition of that subgroup.

I continue to contribute to the IFAF Tackle Rules discussion group and participate as a member of the International Advisory Group to the IAFOA Manual of Football Officiating (the "MOFO").

### ***Flag Football***

Mark continues to represent Australia in the IFAF Flag Rules and Mechanics FB discussion group.

## **AGOA Academy**

During the year I assisted Miles Newman (AGOA Director of Training) in maintaining and updating existing training modules to reflect the recent rule changes, and both Mark and I are currently working on new modules to add to the Academy library.

I'd like to finish by recognising and thanking my colleagues on the Board, CEO Paul Taylor, and all the officials who have helped and supported Mark and I during the year. Your contributions are appreciated and help us move AGOA, and officiating in general, forward.

## Training by Miles Newman

### STATUS - Scope of training in 2021/2022

AGOA offers a range of training solutions to educate officials to support Gridiron Australia games using IFAF rules and mechanics.

We offer:

- Qualification packages matching:
  - Community / Club level
  - State level
  - National level
- Certification as Referee at:
  - Entry / Club
  - Full Certification

We offer this through an on-line system – AGO Academy, webinars and by supporting training modules, video etc.

### ACTIVITES – 2021/22

New courses

- Flag Football
- Formal course introduced

Webinars

- AGOA conducted online seminars then published them online to AGOA online

### COURSES - Course Usage

Game Type	Achievements				Notes
	Enrolled	Completed	2021 %	Overall %	
Level 1. Basic Flag Officials Course	8	1		13	Established in 2021, formal course.
Level 0. Club Level Officials Course	12	11	92	16	Enrolment may be driven by League policy – completion is not.
Level 1. Basic Officials Course	12	11	92	15	
Level 2. State Officials Course	6	5	83	12	
Positional Training - Club Referee	4	4	100	35	
Positional Training - State Referee	6	6	100	18	

## MODEL - Workforce Based on Team Numbers - 2021

State	Teams			Officials Required (based on model crew size)			Total Assignments	Games Max	Attendance Rate	Total	National Required	Actual 2021
	Senior - Mens	Senior - Womens	U19 - Mens	Men	Women	U19						
								2	50%			
Gridiron ACT	3	0	2	7	0	4	11	6	12	12		13
Gridiron NSW	6	5	5	21	10	8	39	20	40	40		55
Gridiron Queensland Inc	12	4	4	42	10	8	60	30	60	60		61
Gridiron SA	4	0	4	14	0	8	22	11	22	22		11
Gridiron Tasmania	4	0	0	14	0	0	14	7	14	14		33
Gridiron Victoria	9	0	8	35	10	8	53	27	54	54		26
Gridiron West	9	9	8	28	20	16	64	32	64	64		40
Totals				161	50	52					266	236

### Notes:

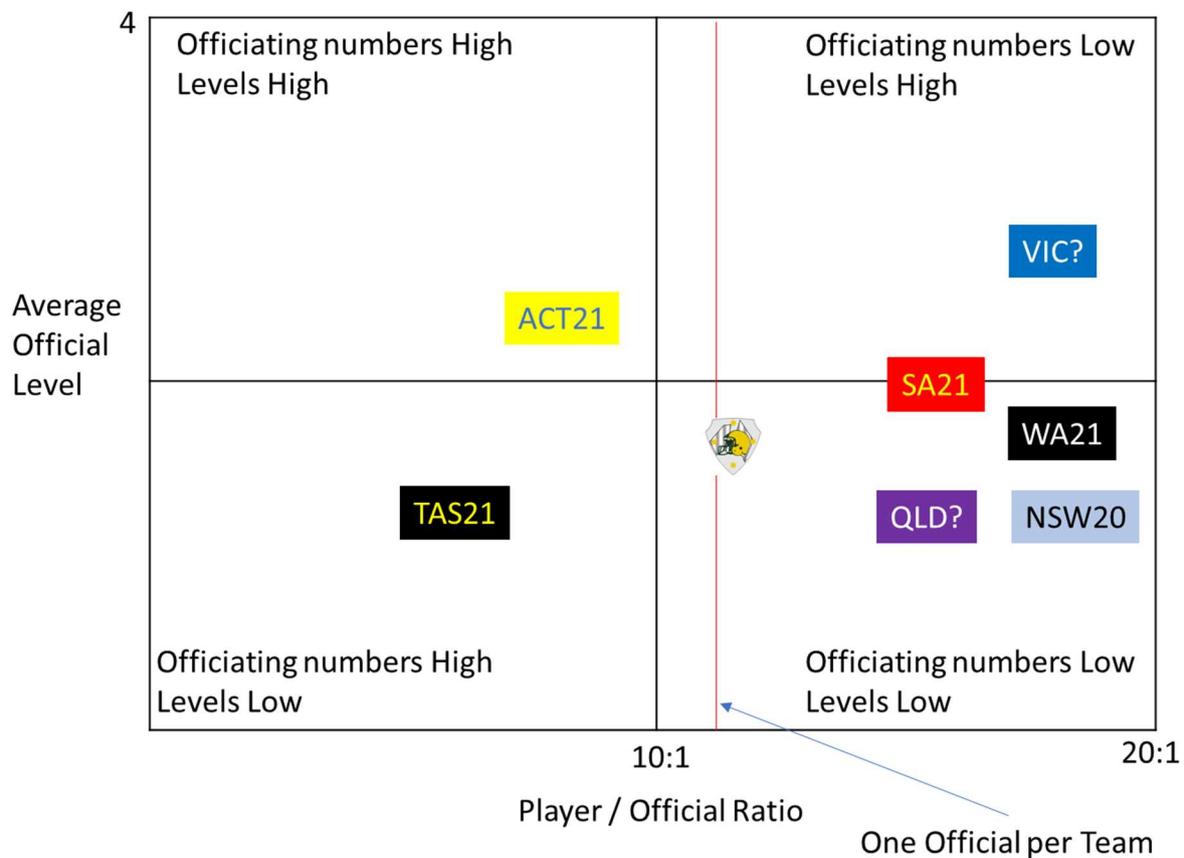
GQ estimates (asked but not received)

Colour coding indicative of risk due to attendance rate

## ACTUAL – Officials by State 2021

State	Club	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Officials	Players	2019 Ratio	2022 Ratio	2019 Average Level	2022 Average Level
Gridiron ACT	2	3	4	2	2	13	110	8.3	8.5	2.3	2.3
Gridiron NSW	33	13	6	2	1	55	111	19.0	2.0	1.5	1.6
Gridiron Queensland Inc	13	31	13	4	0	61	948	0.7	15.5	1.4	1.4
Gridiron SA	5	2	2	2	0	11	165	21.9	15.0	2.0	2.0
Gridiron Tasmania	26	5	2	0	0	33	161	20.8	4.9	1.2	1.3
Gridiron Victoria	8	2	10	4	2	26	444	11.4	17.1	2.2	2.3
Gridiron West	16	9	11	4	0	40	728	15.4	18.2	2.3	1.79
Grand Total	103	65	48	18	5	236	2667	10.7	11.3	1.70	1.73
Level Ratio (Actual)	44%	28%	20%	8%	2%	100%					
Full Time Ratio		48%	35%	17%							
Model		38%	38%	25%							

## KPI



### Notes:

Most states average at National level  
 Numbers are low – need for recruiting  
 Easier for small states – ACT gathers other state product

### Conclusions so far

- Based upon team numbers and crewing model we need around 270 qualified officials
- Our total numbers are probably 90% of the overall need (approx 240)
- Nationally, our average levels (number of each level x level divided by totals) are about right between 1.7 to 1.8
- Our level mix is still low – we need to develop and retain our junior levels up for two reasons – aging and retention
  - Development aids retention – lack of national events has reduced development to L3
  - Aging prevents development
    - Older officials must be encouraged to step aside from prestige/development roles and allow younger officials to take them
    - Average age shows slowed increase but also restricted data on L0/L1, so suspect actually reducing slightly
- Female officials – stagnant – gains equal losses

## COVID Impact

### National Tournaments

There were again no Gridiron Australia (GA) national tournaments in the 2021/22 year as several states were still in the process of normal return to play within their leagues. In the absence of usual interstate tournaments (due to COVID), some interstate games were played as exhibition matches between two states.

These games represented a chance for officials to work additional games but without consistent planning or advanced notice from the participating leagues there was only some avenue for officials from interstate to join the crews.

The AGOA board have begun discussions on liaising with GA on a standard of planning for any interstate GA sanctioned games. This would include the requirement for planning for officials. Ideally this request for officials would be directed through AGOA, who could then work with the state GOA's on crew selection and providing opportunities for developing officials.

In early 2022 GA announced the intended schedule for the return to national tournaments in 2023. The initial outlined schedule is as follows:

- Men – February
- Flag – March
- Juniors – April

With any luck COVID and its impact on Gridiron will have become a general consideration and in the absence of state restrictions will continue as per pre-COVID times.

### State Competitions

During the previous year all states except for NSW returned to play a season of tackle football within at least one division of their league. Participation rates for the women's competition in the eastern states was greatly reduced.

### AGOA Considerations

Due to the impact of COVID it was agreed by the board to reduce the membership fee to \$15 for all levels. The reduction of membership fees over the previous two years was in line with reduced league/game activity nationally due to COVID. With state leagues completing the 2021/22 seasons and the return of GA national competitions in 2023, the AGOA membership fee structure has been reviewed for the 2022/23 year. The fee structure for the upcoming year has been set to \$35 for an Ordinary Member (Level 1+) and \$20 for an Associate Member (Level 0).

Membership fees assist AGOA with fixed operating overheads to deliver training, governance, and development pathways to officials in Australia. These costs include but are not limited to video conferencing, cloud storage, assignment software, association fees and the AGOA website. The fee is not in place to generate a profit for AGOA but rather is needed to cover minimum operating requirements, plus ensure AGOA is sustainable for future opportunities.

## Financial Report

### Treasurer's Report by Mathew Peterson

As I resigned from the position of Treasurer at the 2021 AGM, I have not been involved in any budgeting, decision making or discussion of the finances for AGOA in the last twelve months, however, due to ongoing issues with the transition of signatories to the accounts have continued to operate the accounts on behalf of AGOA. This role should be transitioned to Andrew Calverley in the very short term.

With this in mind, attached are the Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet for the Australian Gridiron Officials Association for the financial year ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Bank balances as of 28/02/2022:

Community Solutions One Account	1,264.73
Community Solutions Cash Reserve	6,640.65
Paypal	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,905.38</b>

### Notes on the accompanying financials

#### ***Profit and Loss Statement***

AGOA recorded a deficit of \$1,156.02 for the financial year, primarily due to continuing lack of Gridiron participation and operations as a result of the COVID pandemic. This financial year also required a return of \$695.00 to the Australian Sports Commission as a partial unused grant repayment for the 2020 Women's Leadership in Sport grant that AGOA was unable to utilise due to a lack of opportunities during the pandemic.

Further payments required related to ongoing IT subscriptions, including Revolutionise, Horizon, Zoom and Dropbox.

#### ***Balance Sheet***

WA Gridiron Officials were owed \$5,785.00 at 28/02/2022, payable on receipt from Gridiron West. These funds were received and paid in mid-March 2022.

## Conclusion

This report provides a summary of activity for the association. There are several open items with the AGOA board that are being progressed, albeit not as quickly as the board would hope. As a volunteer organisation there is undoubtedly a list of action items that outweighs the resources available.

The AGOA board and the association in general needs additional volunteers to assist in achieving improved outcomes for officials nationally. There is currently the open position of Secretary, but volunteers are needed for more than the role bearer positions. If any AGOA members have experience in governance, finance, communications, training or feel they can contribute to any other area, please reach out to our board and CEO.

Following the 2022 AGM, the AGOA board will appoint the 2022/23 Chairperson and undertake a strategic planning and goal setting meeting. Should any members have thoughts and contributions to areas of priority, please feel free to share this with the board.

## APPENDIX A – PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

Australian Gridiron Officials Association (NSW) Inc.

### Profit and Loss Statement

For the period from 01/03/2021 to 28/02/2022

Accrual basis

	28/02/2022	28/02/2021
<b>Income</b>		
Grants & Funding	(695.00)	-
Membership Fees	945.00	1,010.00
Interest received	0.66	5.64
<b>Total — Income</b>	<b>250.66</b>	<b>1,015.64</b>
<b>Less: Expenses</b>		
<b>Admin Costs</b>		
Annual Return Fees	84.37	-
Legal fees	-	538.00
<b>Software Licenses</b>		
IT Expenses	421.10	648.13
Membership Management Services	901.21	911.69
Training System Licensing/Hosting	-	268.53
<b>Total — Software Licenses</b>	<b>1,322.31</b>	<b>1,828.35</b>
<b>Total — Admin Costs</b>	<b>1,406.68</b>	<b>2,366.35</b>
<b>Financial Institution Charges</b>		
Paypal Commission	-	2.94
<b>Mentoring Program</b>		
Mentoring Programs	-	1,305.00
Other Travel Costs - Mentor	-	61.83
<b>Total — Mentoring Program</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,366.83</b>
<b>Total — Expenses</b>	<b>1,406.68</b>	<b>3,736.12</b>
<b>Net profit (loss)</b>	<b>(1,156.02)</b>	<b>(2,720.48)</b>

## APPENDIX B – BALANCE SHEET

Australian Gridiron Officials Association (NSW) Inc.

### Balance Sheet

As at 28/02/2022

Accrual basis

	28/02/2022	28/02/2021
<b>Assets</b>		
Accounts receivable	6,500.08	4,150.08
Cash at bank	7,905.38	9,241.40
<b>Total — Assets</b>	<b>14,405.46</b>	<b>13,391.48</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	349.00	349.00
Western Australian Gridiron Officials	5,785.00	3,615.00
<b>Total — Liabilities</b>	<b>6,134.00</b>	<b>3,964.00</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>8,271.46</b>	<b>9,427.48</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained earnings	8,271.46	9,427.48
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>8,271.46</b>	<b>9,427.48</b>