



TOUCH FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA

# 2019/2020

## ANNUAL REPORT

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THIS IS  
TOUCH FOOTBALL



TOUCH



## **TOUCH FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA**

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**2019/2020**  
ANNUAL REPORT



# MESSAGE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION

## The start of 2020 has been an extraordinarily tough time for Australians, including all of us committed to sport.

The impact of bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic have been confronting for communities, where we all know sport plays such an important role.

At the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), comprising Sport Australia and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), our energy is focused on supporting our partners through these times as we continue to advocate the importance of sport to our economy, productivity, health, wellbeing and culture.

We believe whole-heartedly that when we get through this challenging period, sport will play a prominent role in lifting the nation's energy and spirits again.

Times such as these can also make us more appreciative of what we do have and of the success we have achieved.

Success in sport is always hard fought. But it's a fight Australian high-performance sport welcomes as it continues to achieve success.

Last year the wonderful Ash Barty won the French Open and became our first female No1 tennis player since her idol, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, in 1976. Javelin-thrower Kelsey Lee-Barber set personal bests throughout the year and took the title at the IAAF World Championships in Doha. Dylan Alcott added three more Grand Slam quad wheelchair singles trophies to the cabinet and sailing duo Matt Belcher and Will Ryan claimed the men's 470 World Championship. In the pool, our swimmers won seven gold medals at the FINA World Championships, placing Australia fourth on the medal tally.

This year our inspiring women's cricket team won a fifth World T20 title, drawing a record crowd of 86,174 to the MCG. How fitting that this historical moment fell on International Women's Day. These results are a testament to the tenacity and passion of athletes, coaches, sports staff and sporting organisations, which we know have all the skills and abilities to achieve success.

I am proud too of the service our organisation provides to Australian sport each year, on behalf of the Australian Government.

The ASC, through Sport Australia and the AIS, delivers 25,000 grants a year.

The AIS funds and prepares our Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games to represent us at the highest level in international competition.

In the past few years, we have enhanced our support to athlete wellbeing and engagement, a move that is essential, especially in the current environment.

Sport Australia invests in sports participation programs, from our national Sporting Schools program for younger children through to the Better Ageing program aimed at Australians aged 65 and over.

So many of these grants fuel aspirations. Our Local Sporting Champions program supports 9,000 children a year to reach for their sporting dreams.

Our Women Leaders in Sport program and the AIS Talent program provide opportunities for women to progress their professional development in all roles across sport.

We continue to work with sports to modernise traditional governance structures in Australian sporting organisations and we continue to encourage environments that are inclusive, diverse, safe and welcoming, making sport the benchmark for a more equitable society.

This was to be the year of the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo. Instead, it has been postponed to 2021, with the Olympic Games to be held from 23 July to 8 August 2021 and the Paralympics from 24 August to 5 September 2021.

We have already witnessed a great deal of positivity from athletes who now need to re-set. I'm confident, as a united sport system, we will do the same.



**JOHN WYLIE**  
Chair, Australian Sports Commission



# TFA CHAIR REPORT

**The 2019-20 year was tracking to be hugely successful for Touch Football on so many levels until sport came to a grinding halt in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The year got underway with much promise as the Sydney Cricket Ground played host to the Grand Finals of the NRL Touch Premiership, with the Broncos, Cowboys, Eels and Knights taking centre stage in two nail-biting matches. Over the ensuing months, TFA secured commitment from the NRL, NRL clubs and broadcasters for an even bigger year of the sport's marquee domestic competition, which was cancelled only weeks before the third season was due to tap off.

In the first Youth Trans-Tasman series held in Australia since 2015, our young Emus teams won on home soil against a very worthy opponent, a testament to our pathway programs and our elite participation efforts.

In partnership with Sport Australia, Touch Football Specialised launched our All Abilities Program, providing opportunities for people with physical or intellectual impairments to take the field with other members of the Touch community, making Touch Football more inclusive than ever. As these programs rolled out across the country, TFA introduced the first ever All Abilities division at the National Touch League (NTL), referred to as "the best thing the sport has ever done" by many of those privileged enough to be there to witness it. This played out just days before COVID-19 restrictions hit, at which point, people were not only restricted from gathering in crowds like those we saw at the NTL but Australians had to stop taking part in normal life, including sport, altogether.

The achievements of the first months of the year were significant, but the more significant achievements came after the pandemic forced the shutdown of sport and society.

My respect for TFA CEO Jamie O'Connor and TFA's executive team has only grown after working with them through this period of huge change and uncertainty. They had the challenging job of providing leadership during the sport's unprecedented shutdown, and managed to protect the organisation, support our incredibly committed staff and steer the sport to a successful reboot once restrictions started lifting. My full gratitude goes to them for their hard work, commitment to troubleshooting as situations changed daily, and their ability to remain positive as we looked to the future without certainty.

It was a hugely challenging time for all our staff. We thank every one of you for your commitment during the turbulence. The Board is aware that you have gone above and beyond your

responsibilities to keep our sport viable and functioning. The challenges posed by the pandemic only made your passion for the sport and work ethic even more evident to the Board. Never think your efforts have gone unnoticed or unappreciated.

Our TFA Board also worked tirelessly behind the scenes to provide guidance and decision-making during this tough time. My thanks go to this inspiring group of good people who dedicate their time and energy to help future-proof the sport.

The 2019-20 Annual General Meeting will see the retirement of former Chairman Michael Rush from the TFA Board. Michael's contribution to the organisation cannot be overstated and his loss will be immeasurable. Michael's legacies will be his unwavering focus on industry-leading strong governance and robust financial management that has allowed the sport for the first time in 50 years to invest in itself. Michael, the sport will never be able to thank you enough for your contribution.

On behalf of the TFA Board, thank you to the State and Territory Advisory Committee (STACs) members for their commitment to helping grow the sport around the country, and to the Boards of the New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) and Queensland Touch Football (QTF) for the collaboration that has taken place over 2019-20. We are excited to continue accomplishing great things together as the sport reboots.

We thank the ARLC, our partner the NRL, and NRL clubs for their ongoing support during what has been an immensely uncertain time in Rugby League's history. We look forward to continuing to work together in this new world, to achieve outcomes for both sports. We thank the ARLC nominees on our Board for their support, wise counsel, acumen and commitment to grow our sports together in synergy.

We have also lost three tremendous leaders, advocates and guiding influences in our sport. We pay respects to these incredible people who over many years made extraordinary contributions – NSWTA President, Aileen May, and TFA Life Members, Ray Vawdon and Lou Tompkins, all passed away this year. Their impact on the sport will be felt forever; our community is richer for their dedication and we will be forever grateful.

Above all, I would like to thank the volunteers, administrators, players, referees and officials of our great sport all around the country – you are the people who make our sport and community happen. It was evident during the COVID shutdown that while people missed sport, what they missed even more was the wonderful community around it. It has been a reminder of the importance of Touch Football for bringing fun, friendship, connectedness and a sense of belonging to the lives of hundreds of thousands of Australians. We look forward to continuing to deliver these benefits to even more people as we strive to grow the game and enhance the experience further.

We are the sport Australians are wanting and asking for. We are all-inclusive, family-friendly, non-contact, fun, competitive, challenging and community-based. I believe Touch is the future of community-based sport in Australia. Let's all work together to make it happen.

**ANITA HAGARTY**  
Chair, Touch Football Australia

# TFA DIRECTORS BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCES

## 2019-2020 FINANCIAL YEAR

Touch Football Australia (TFA) acknowledges the dedicated support of the Directors for the period from July 2019 through to June 2020. The ongoing dedication of these Directors to the national body is vital to the sport's ongoing success and links to the membership.



DIRECTOR	BOARD MEETINGS ELIGIBLE	BOARD MEETINGS ATTENDED
Anita Hagarty	5	5
Neil Collins	5	5
Barry McNamara	5	5
Michael Rush	5	5
Cassandra Lawry	5	5
Andrew Hill	4	3
Erin Taylor	0	0
Rachel Baird	2	0
Todd Greenberg	1	0



# TFA CEO REPORT

**Well, what a year... one that started with great excitement and promise quickly shifted to the most challenging period our sport has seen. Despite the world being turned on its head and sport coming to an abrupt halt in March, there is so much to celebrate in another great year for the sport.**

2019 saw the NRL Touch Premiership enter its second year; our first full year of matches played across regional and metropolitan cities of Australia and New Zealand with the Grand Final being played on the hallowed turf of the Sydney Cricket Ground. Congratulations to Leasha Thouard's Brisbane Broncos and Phil Gyemore's North Queensland Cowboys teams on their respective victories. Both teams paved different paths en route to their Grand Final success but both showed what champion teams do when games are on the line.

The Australian Emus got their first chance to play on home soil since their World Cup success, with the Youth teams defeating New Zealand in all divisions of the Youth Trans-Tasman at the new home of international Touch, the City of Newcastle, in January. In typical warm Australian conditions, all six Boys, Girls and Mixed teams represented their country with tremendous passion, and did their friends, family, their jersey and our sport proud both on and off the field. Congratulations to all the players and their families, coaches and support staff on a successful campaign and, of course, much thanks to Joe Sprangers and Touch New Zealand for a wonderful series.

Unfortunately, the much-anticipated Open Trans-Tasman was the first major event that fell by the wayside due to COVID-19, with the series scheduled for April ultimately cancelled. The pandemic has seen the postponement of the international calendar, but we are looking forward to being able to travel again soon and getting the international game back up and going. To Erick Acker, Bill Ker, the Federation of International Touch and all of our international counterparts, we hope you are doing well during this difficult time and we look forward to working with you on the other side.

Just before restrictions came into place in March, we were fortunate to see the 24th edition of the National Touch League scrape through, with 119 teams taking part over four days in Coffs Harbour. Karley Banks and Dylan Thompson combined again to lead the Hunter Western Hornets to back-to-back titles in one of the most dominant displays we have seen in the Men's Open division, defeating North Queensland 11-2; while the Sydney Mets hung on in a tight one against Sydney Scorpions 4-3 in the Women's Open final. The SQBD Sharks collected yet another Golden Boot Award as the overall champion entity, and we congratulate and thank all those involved in what proved to be another successful NTL.

For the first time in our sport's history, TFA incorporated an All Abilities division into our national championships, with seven teams taking part. For those fortunate enough to see the passion, enthusiasm and sheer joy on the faces of the athletes, I am sure it will go down as one of the most moving and memorable experiences in our sport. I would like to recognise Graeme Clancy for his years of dedication and unwavering commitment to making this happen and thank Danni Davis who did a wonderful job in pulling together such a fabulous event. To all the players and support staff of the teams who

took part, congratulations on a wonderful achievement and thank you for making the 24th National Touch League one to remember.

As NTL drew to a close, Australia went into shutdown, with government restrictions, border closures and lockdowns commonplace across the country and competitions quickly coming to a halt. The effect of the closures and the uncertainty over how long the pandemic would have an impact on the sport presented significant challenges.

The early stage financial projections were dire and placed the organisation in the unenviable position of having to make very difficult decisions in order to protect the long-term viability of the sport. The organisation adopted an aggressive cost-efficiency strategy with all but a skeleton staff crew retained under part-time employment conditions to protect cash resources and members' equity. While necessary, and recognised by staff that way, the move was nonetheless extremely difficult and placed enormous pressure on our people and their wellbeing.

To that end I would like to thank each and every one of the TFA staff for their understanding and professionalism during what was a most difficult time. Not only did they understand and respect the needs of the business, but they continued to turn up to support the community as we prepared to reboot the sport.

While difficult, the strategy allowed the organisation to record a strong financial result for the period, with an operating loss of \$226,762 which, as outlined in the Financial Report, is a result of targeted investment activity; primarily the investment into the 2019 NRL Touch Premiership.

Not only did we effectively navigate our way through the final quarter of the financial period, we also managed to record some strong participation outcomes, with Junior membership increasing by 6% and accredited volunteers increasing by 13% despite our inability to provide winter competitions across most locations.

TFA has managed to post some extraordinary results during an extraordinary year due to the unrelenting desire of the TFA Board to ensure the business and sport thrives. I would like to thank TFA Chair, Anita Hagarty, the Board of Directors, and the TFA Leadership Team of Garry Foran, Tim Wyld, Brad Mitchell, Alice Ellis and Wayne Grant for their support, commitment and resolve over this past year.

I would also like to thank our State and Territory Advisory Committees, QTF and NSWTA for their contributions to the sport in their respective locations; I look forward to continuing to work together in rebooting and growing the sport as we manoeuvre our way out of a COVID environment.

Thank you also to all our commercial partners, the NRL, NRL clubs, Sport Australia and respective state government partners for your ongoing support and contribution to our sport; we look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Most critical to our sport's success are our volunteers. It is the people who mark the lines, coach our kids, referee our games and administer our competitions that make this a truly special community and, on behalf of all of us at Touch Football Australia, I offer our heartfelt thanks for your time, energy and commitment to our great sport.

**JAMIE O'CONNOR**  
CEO, Touch Football Australia





# 2019-20 HIGHLIGHTS

## There are plenty of highlights to celebrate despite a challenging year

After an exciting first half of the year, 2020 brought significant challenges for all sports, including Touch Football. After the drought and bushfires impacting competitions in some states, COVID-19 caused the complete shutdown of community and elite Touch. That led to participation decline, financial and staffing hurdles, and the cancellation of events including the 2020 Open Trans-Tasman and NRL Touch Premiership in its third year.

Before Coronavirus hit, TFA had already achieved plenty of wins, some covered below and on the following pages – then in the face of challenges and ongoing uncertainty, staff and stakeholders steered the sport through the pandemic, using the shutdown to innovate, pivot and, eventually prepare for the sport's reboot.

### Launch of 8th Edition Rules

After a year-long review, TFA launched a new Rule Book in January. The intent of the publication of the *8th Edition Touch Football Rules* was not to change the way the game is played – rather it was to update the rules to reflect the current trends of the game.

Some key changes: the 5-metre rule changed to 7 metres; new clarity around period of time in the Sin Bin; and a new Drop-Off format. The 8th Edition Rules should by now have been implemented by all competitions and events in Australia. For more information, go to [touchfootball.com.au/volunteer/8th-edition-rules](http://touchfootball.com.au/volunteer/8th-edition-rules)

### Launch of the All Abilities Program

In the previous reporting period, TFA adopted the operations of Touch Football Specialised (TFS), and at the beginning of 2019-2020, the TFS department, in partnership with Sport Australia, launched the new All Abilities Program. All Abilities is a completely inclusive program, in that it gives people with an intellectual or physical impairment the opportunity to take part in Touch Football activities and compete in games with their carers, family, friends and even elite athletes.

A total of 14 All Abilities programs were rolled out during the period at Affiliates in New South Wales, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania. Turn to the Events page, overleaf, to read about the introduction of the first ever All Abilities division at the 2020 National Touch League.

### Pride in Sport membership

As another step towards delivering the most inclusive sport, TFA became a member of Pride in Sport, an inclusion program designed to assist sporting organisations with the inclusion of people from the LGBTQ community. Since then, TFA has been working with the organisation to update policy, support LGBTQ inclusion through communications, and in February, TFA Chair Anita Hagarty and CEO Jamie O'Connor marched as part of the Pride in Sport float in the 2020 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

### New partnerships and partner retention

TFA welcomed new major partner Inferno and secured new national licensed apparel suppliers for the next three-year period. TFA also established new commercial partnerships with Inspire Sport Online and Adjusta Mattress. In addition to these new partners, it was gratifying to renew key partnerships with Mater, Indomie Australia and Buderim Ginger at the end of the period, demonstrating our sport's strong value proposition and commitment from partners.

### The sport's reboot during COVID-19

When COVID-19 hit, government restrictions forced the suspension of community sport and the cancellation of elite events all over the country. As well as using the time to pivot and refocus, TFA prepared for the sport's reboot. Using government protocols as a guide, the team developed Return-to-Play Protocols and Guidelines, as well as associated collateral and resources for Affiliates. TFA's Official Health Partner Mater and its Director of Infectious Diseases Dr Paul Griffin oversaw the development of the Guidelines.

Having missed both the sport itself and the community it provides, participants were thrilled to return when state governments eased restrictions – first in the Northern Territory in early June, Western Australia mid-June, South Australia late June, and the rest of the country due early in the 2020-21 period.







# HIGHLIGHTS: NATIONAL EVENTS

## TFA had already run a mix of successful events when the sport came to a halt in the second half of 2019-20

### NRL and club support for the Premiership

A successful second year of the NRL Touch Premiership (NRLTP) wrapped up with Women's and Men's Grand Finals at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday 18th August, with the Broncos taking out the Women's and the Cowboys the Men's. The 2019 season was significantly expanded from the inaugural 2018 competition, with Women's and Men's teams from eight clubs battling it out over 26 game days played across five months at stadiums all over Australia and New Zealand, with broadcasts on Fox Sports, Kayo, NRL.com and Sky Sport NZ. The season had a total broadcast audience of 432,550 (excluding Kayo figures, which are unavailable). On completion of the season, TFA secured financial support from the NRL and involved NRL clubs for the Premiership to continue. Unfortunately, the impacts of COVID meant the competition had to be cancelled for 2020, but TFA is committed to the continuation of the elite broadcast competition ongoing.



### Emus take out Youth Trans-Tasman

TFA, in partnership with the City of Newcastle, hosted the Kiwis for a thrilling 2020 Youth Trans-Tasman (YTT) Test Series. The January event was the first to kick off Newcastle's role as the new home of international Touch Football, with other 2020 and 2022 Trans-Tasman events also scheduled to be held at No.2 Sportsground. (Unfortunately COVID-19 led to the postponement of the 2020 Open Trans-Tasman event.) At the YTT, the Australian Emus defeated New Zealand in the series as well as in all six divisions – the 18s and 20s Mixed, Girls and Boys. All Emus teams did Australia, and the sport of Touch Football, proud. Thanks goes to Touch New Zealand for a wonderful tournament.





### Touch All-Stars 2020

In February TFA once again took part in the NRL All-Stars event, as a demonstration of the importance of our partnership with the NRL and our commitment to celebrating the phenomenal skill of Touch's Indigenous and Māori athletes. Jordan Marshall-King and Ash Quinlan co-captained the Māori Mixed team, with Head Coach John Peeni and Assistant Coaches Te Aroha Paki and Tristan Mana. The Indigenous Australian team was co-captained by Marikki Watego and Cody Green, with Head Coach Mel Mitchell and Assistant Coaches Scott Prince and Phil Gyemore. The Māori team led 7-3 at half-time, and continued to dominate, with a full-time score of 12-8. The event was held at Cbus Super Stadium on the Gold Coast, and as part of camp the teams ran a school clinic with kids at Burleigh Heads State School, played matches with All Abilities teams, attended State of Mind training and attended a jersey presentation the evening before.



### National championships, and All Abilities at NTL

The 2019 National Youth Championships (NYC) and National Schools Cup (NSC) event on the Sunshine Coast was a success, with South Queensland Sharks taking out the 18s Girls for NYC and NSW Combined High Schools taking 18s Boys. The 2020 Inferno National Touch League (NTL) in Coffs Harbour was a particularly special event. The Touch on display from Open and Masters divisions was thrilling, with South Queensland Sharks Golden Boot champions, Hunter Western Hornets Men's Open champions, Sydney Mets Women's Open champions and Sydney Rebels Mixed Open champions. Yet what was even more exciting was the introduction of an All Abilities division (sponsored by Indomie) for the first time ever at a national event. A total of 40 athletes – a mix of Certified Athletes (with a physical or intellectual impairment) and Non-Certified Athletes (without an impairment) – across seven teams competed. The Sydney Scorpions took out the Tier 1 final and the Sydney Mets the Tier 2 final. The best thing about the event was the support the All Abilities teams received from the broader community – the Grand Final run-on tunnel on the stadium field became so long it had to be curved; and there were emotional spectators passing the message between each other and on to TFA that this was the greatest thing they have ever seen the sport do throughout its history. The All Abilities division will of course now become a mainstay of the NTL ongoing.





HIGHLIGHTS:

# DIGITAL ACHIEVEMENTS

## TFA made significant leaps in the digital space during the reporting period

### New Learning Management System

TFA partnered with etrainu to launch, in September, a Learning Management System (LMS) branded as 'The Nest'. For the first time as a sport, The Nest gives TFA the ability to talk to accredited volunteers and target ongoing education opportunities to our membership. This system streamlines the administrative processes for Touch Football Course Facilitators and Referee Coaches across the country, allowing TFA greater reach than ever before. The Nest will become a hub where all members of the sport will go to develop their knowledge of the game and will provide a whole-of-sport education profile. The name 'The Nest' comes from the fact that the Australian teams are now known as 'The Emus'. For emus, their nest is their 'home' where development is fostered for young and old. Access The Nest via [touchfootball.etrainu.com](http://touchfootball.etrainu.com)



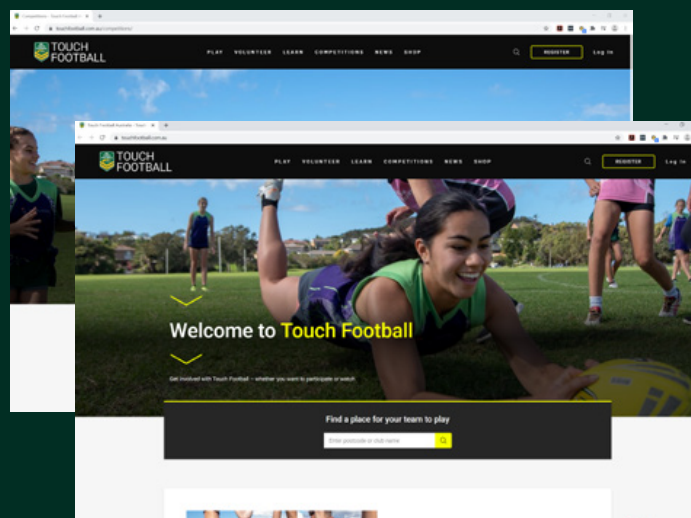
### Launch of MySideline

After a lengthy scoping process as TFA and the NRL's contract for the previous registration and competition management platform was coming to an end, the sports began working with developers to build a tailor-made product for both sports, called MySideline. The NRL launched their side of the platform in

November, while TFA followed in April. COVID-19 hitting at the same time as Touch's launch complicated the program's rollout and, seeing as the program is undergoing a progressive build, the ongoing development of functionality. Transferring all Touch administrators and participants over to a brand new system when they had been using the previous system for 15 years was always going to be challenging. Additional challenges arose due to two different sports with different structures and functions developing a system together, as well as the diverse ways that different Touch administrators run the sport around the country. Despite challenges, once sport began to reboot when COVID restrictions lifted, the new system proved user-friendly for participants. And although administrators have experienced teething problems and been frustrated by some functionality missing currently, many have also found the system more intuitive overall. One of the advantages of developing a new system controlled by the sports is that the program will continue to develop into the future. TFA continues to work to develop the system and help support new users through the transition period, and is looking forward to the system reaching a point where developers can focus on innovation so the system becomes the best-in-market product.

### New website

With the development of MySideline came the build of a brand new Touch Football website. The new whole-of-sport [www.touchfootball.com.au](http://www.touchfootball.com.au) site was designed by NRL Digital and created by TFA staff, then launched in March. As well as being a more engaging site, with a more modern and appealing





look and features, the new website is now the portal for people all over the country to find Touch Football competitions and register straight to them, as well as the match centre where fixtures and results for all competitions and events display. Being the destination for not only Touch Football information and content, but also the competition finder and all registrations, fixtures and results, has for the first time given the sport a central national location to market the sport from. Despite lacking the Season 1 participation, NRL Touch Premiership and World Cup of the previous financial year and almost no Touch activity at all from when the website launched on 20th March, website traffic grew and is tracking to grow immensely in the next period:

#### 2018-2019

381,371 Sessions

237,341 Users

#### 2019-2020

388,338 Sessions

245,603 Users

#### Social media and new content

The suspension of Touch significantly halted the growth in followers that TFA's social media channels saw the previous year, further demonstrating the impact that the profile-raising 2019 NRL Touch Premiership had on social media growth. Without new Touch for content, TFA had to innovate in



order to continue engaging the community and to provide value to partners. New content initiatives TFA implemented included:


- » **The Late Switch podcast**, interviews by Touch commentator Scott MacAllister (presented by Indomie Noodles)
- » **TFA Affiliate Podcasts** to provide remote servicing to administrators
- » **Launch of The Final Touch online training program**, by Australian athletes and exercise scientists Samantha Rodgers and Ash Kearney, in partnership with TFA
- » **Skills enhancement content**, including drills clips by Australian Emus, housed on the new Skills Hub ([touchfootball.com.au/learn/skills](http://touchfootball.com.au/learn/skills))
- » **Ballers in the Kitchen** Instagram and Facebook Stories, to showcase what some of our community was cooking during lockdown (presented by Buderim Ginger)
- » **Game replays**, including retro games for #ThrowbackThursday and NRLTP replays on Sundays
- » **Written profiles and news**, which proved written stories can still drive traffic (22,242 readers clicked through to the TFA website to read a total of 15 stories throughout the period)
- » **Elite player takeovers of TFA's TikTok**, which generated 'at home with' rep players content
- » **#SteedenPassChallenge** virtual pass the footy social media competition for teams, associations and clubs

Although restrictions were starting to ease at the end of the period, the content and social media innovations that COVID-19 forced were valuable for engagement and many of these initiatives will continue.

#### Social media performance

Despite the sport being shut down for months, and not having the 2020 NRL Touch Premiership that boosted TFA's social followings in the previous year, TFA achieved the following social media results:


- » **6,191,599 Facebook reach**
- » **1,163,808 Instagram reach**
- » **1.2 million reach on Facebook for a single video** of Ryan Papenhuyzen and Kalyn Ponga back when they represented Australia in Touch (same video reached an additional 178,613 on Instagram)
- » **637K viewers were reached by a Facebook post** about the 2020 Youth Trans-Tasman (YTT) live stream
- » **A total of 1.7 million minutes** of the 2020 YTT live stream was watched by audiences
- » **50,000 followers on Instagram** were reached at NTL 2020




**The Late Switch with Scott MacAllister.**

Scotty sits down with some of the biggest names in Australian Touch Football. Available via Spotify Podcasts or check out the videos below


**SERIES 1**



**Pete Norman**  
Scotty Mac catches up with current Australian Emu's Touch Football player Pete Norman on his personal journey in the sport



**Hayley Maddick**  
Following on from his chat with Pete Norman, Scotty Mac catches up with Hayley Maddick, current Australian Emus player and future surfing legend. If



**Dylan Hennessey**  
This episode Scotty Mac catches up with Dylan Hennessey who currently is ranked the best Touch Football player in the world by his peers. So, Scotty

## Enhanced School Focus



Target:  
400,000  
participants

Jun 2020 aim: 400,000 in schools engaged

» Sporting Schools	» 17/18: 380,720
» School Gala Days	» 18/19: 372,437
» School Events	» 19/20: 314,680
» Development Days	
» Teacher Education	-15.5% on previous year

# OUTCOMES OF 2020 PARTICIPATION TARGETS



## Increased Participation Footprint



Target:  
350  
locations

Jun 2020 aim: 350 affiliated locations

» Unaffiliated transition	» 17/18: 309
» Competition growth	» 18/19: 320
» Modified formats	» 19/20: 318
» Multicultural focus	
	-0.6% on previous year

## Transition From School Competitions



Target:  
15% transition  
rate

Jun 2020 aim: 15% transition from school programs to community competitions by Jun 2020

» Educated & informed coaches	» 18/19: 28.3%
» Active Affiliates	» 19/20: 22.8%
» Effective monitoring	
» Informative competition leads	7.8% higher than target
» NRL Dev Officers	



## Senior Affiliate Retention



Target:  
54.1%  
retention  
rate

Jun 2020 aim: To increase senior retention to 54.1%

» Enhance experience	» 18/19: 44.2%
» Enhance ageing opportunities	» 19/20: 45.3%
» Provide value for money	+1.1% on previous year
» Upskill referees	

## Junior Participation Growth



Target:  
88,494  
participants

Jun 2020 aim: To increase junior participation (in affiliated competitions) by 10% to 88,494

» Leverage NRLTP	» 17/18: 80,449
» Enhance partnerships	» 18/19: 88,347
» Promote female pathways	» 19/20: 93,624
» Transition unaffiliated competitions	6% higher than target



## Development of Our People



**Target:**  
20,000  
volunteers

**Jun 2020 aim:** 20,000 volunteers

- » New LMS
  - » Enhanced course maintenance
  - » Accessing new volunteers
  - » Increase course facilitators
- » **17/18:** 15,647
  - » **18/19:** 18,964
  - » **19/20:** 21,437
  - +13% on previous year

## High-Quality Sport Delivery



**Target:**  
75%  
satisfaction  
level

**Jun 2020 aim:** Deliver the sport to a satisfaction level of 75% or higher

- » Affiliates resource hub
  - » Affiliate health checks
  - » Effective monitoring & reporting
  - » Increased education & training
- » **17/18:** 75%
  - » **18/19:** 80%
  - » **19/20:** 80%
  - 5% higher than target

## Unique Experiences



**Target:**  
69,803 event  
participants

**Jun 2020 aim:** 5% growth in events to 69,803 participants

- » Provide first-class events & facilities
  - » Increase age divisions
  - » Increase events
  - » Effective monitoring & reporting
- » **17/18:** 63,313
  - » **18/19:** 74,948
  - » **19/20:** 57,948
  - 22.7% on previous year

## Diverse Offerings



**Target:**  
500 teams

**Jun 2020 aim:** Alternative models to grow by 500 teams

- » Modified offerings
  - » Commercial Competitions
  - » Strategic alliances
  - » Inclusive offerings
- » **18/19:** 47
  - » **19/20:** 122
  - +159.6% on previous year

# NATIONAL PARTICIPATION 2019/20

Participation Category	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
1. Full Active Membership – Adult	138,881	147,678	141,054	132,028	126,080	129,090	86,270
2. Full Active Membership – Junior	69,840	72,338	71,989	77,380	80,449	88,347	93,624
3. Program Participants	22,728	20,050	6,648	9,875	12,948	13,790	10,027
4. Event Participants	67,873	73,647	91,239	60,812	63,313	74,948	57,948
5. School Delivered Programs	63,803	107,979	86,939	114,747	95,664	95,352	85,770
6. School Managed Competitions	218,053	202,176	248,490	203,779	285,056	277,085	228,910
7. Accredited Volunteer Participants	42,988	48,950	48,068	12,157	15,647	18,964	21,437
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>624,166</b>	<b>672,818</b>	<b>694,427</b>	<b>610,778</b>	<b>679,156</b>	<b>697,576</b>	<b>583,986</b>
<b>Schools and Juniors</b>	<b>351,696</b>	<b>382,493</b>	<b>407,418</b>	<b>395,906</b>	<b>461,169</b>	<b>460,784</b>	<b>408,304</b>

## Key highlights from the 2019/20 Participation Report include:

- » VIC Program Participants saw an increase by 75.7%
- » VIC School Managed Competitions increased by 23.8%
- » ACT Junior Full Active Members increased by 66.5%
- » ACT Event Participants rose by 44.6%
- » ACT Junior Team numbers grew by a total of 23.3%
- » WA Program Participants grew by 363.4%
- » WA Full Active Junior numbers increased by 54.5%
- » TAS School Delivered Programs grew by 3.3%
- » TAS Full Active Juniors increased participation by 41.4%
- » NT Total Participants grew by 22.4%
- » NT Schools and Juniors grew by 48.9%
- » SA Full Active Junior members grew by 11.5%
- » SA Program Participants increased by 55.2%
- » QLD School delivered programs increased by 30.3%
- » QLD Total Schools and Juniors increased by 6.5%
- » NSW Junior Team numbers increased by 3.6% or 147 teams
- » NSW Accredited Volunteers grew by a total of 4%

## TRADITIONAL FULL AFFILIATED MEMBERS

### Senior Comparisons 2018/19 to 2019/20

	S2 – 2018	S1 – 2019	Total 2018-19	S2 – 2019	S1 – 2020	Total 2019-20	Total Variance	Percentage Variance
NSW	3,423	972	4,395	3,250	60	3,310	-1,085	-24.7%
QLD	2,290	2,035	4,325	2,252	1,207	3,459	-866	-20.0%
ACT	172	122	294	160	0	160	-134	-45.6%
VIC	383	143	526	373	0	373	-153	-29.1%
TAS	204	36	240	209	0	209	-31	-12.9%
SA	154	101	255	172	34	206	-49	-19.2%
WA	378	163	541	333	37	370	-171	-31.6%
NT	88	108	196	90	68	158	-38	-19.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,092</b>	<b>3,680</b>	<b>10,772</b>	<b>6,839</b>	<b>1,406</b>	<b>8,245</b>	<b>-2,527</b>	<b>-23.5%</b>



## Junior Comparisons 2018/19 to 2019/20

	S2 – 2018	S1 – 2019	Total 2018-19	S2 – 2019	S1 – 2020	Total 2019-20	Total Variance	Percentage Variance
NSW	3,997	104	4,101	4,245	3	4,248	147	3.6%
QLD	2,011	796	2,807	2,070	670	2,740	-67	-2.4%
ACT	69	4	73	90	0	90	17	23.3%
VIC	50	53	103	35	0	35	-68	-66.0%
TAS	115	0	115	129	0	129	14	12.2%
SA	39	12	51	20	0	20	-31	-60.8%
WA	64	0	64	50	0	50	-14	-21.9%
NT	1	3	4	13	1	14	10	250.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,346</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>7,318</b>	<b>6,652</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>7,326</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

## New South Wales Touch Football Participation 2019/20

Participation Category	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
1. Full Active Member – Adult	54,309	54,079	52,020	51,086	55,955	35,877
2. Full Active Member – Junior	40,016	54,079	42,210	43,684	52,084	53,975
3. Program Participants	8,444	517	296	3,028	1,623	825
4. Event Participants	36,959	63,060	30,055	31,119	32,208	31,677
5. School Delivered Programs	76,600	40,279	49,865	43,037	42,358	36,295
6. School Managed Competitions	189,822	229,447	179,241	255,557	251,387	206,578
7. Accredited Volunteer Participants	2,853	1,058	1,536	1,512	1,291	1,342
<b>Total Participation</b>	<b>409,003</b>	<b>442,519</b>	<b>355,223</b>	<b>429,023</b>	<b>436,906</b>	<b>372,113</b>
<b>Schools and Juniors</b>	<b>306,438</b>	<b>323,805</b>	<b>271,316</b>	<b>342,278</b>	<b>345,829</b>	<b>296,260</b>

## Queensland Touch Football Participation 2019/20

Participation Category	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
1. Full Active Member – Adult	60,627	59,670	52,223	49,703	48,559	32,652
2. Full Active Member – Junior	26,460	27,630	30,128	31,500	31,624	33,345
3. Program Participants	3,188	4,651	7,255	8,185	9,769	5,171
4. Event Participants	13,311	21,575	22,939	25,667	29,184	17,032
5. School Delivered Programs	15,565	17,329	27,995	18,152	15,471	20,152
6. School Managed Competitions	4,391	5,965	10,715	12,903	9,315	9,086
7. Accredited Volunteer Participants	1,033	1,166	1,316	1,349	1,322	775
<b>Total Participation</b>	<b>124,575</b>	<b>137,986</b>	<b>152,571</b>	<b>147,459</b>	<b>145,244</b>	<b>118,213</b>
<b>Schools and Juniors</b>	<b>46,416</b>	<b>50,924</b>	<b>68,838</b>	<b>62,555</b>	<b>56,410</b>	<b>62,583</b>



# AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY REPORT



**The 2019-2020 reporting year has been like no other for Touch Football ACT (TFACT). The challenges of summer saw many competition nights lost due to poor air quality from the bushfires that engulfed the ACT and greater NSW. The sport managed to limp through to the end of Season 2 2019 to be hit with COVID-19, which resulted in the cancellation of the winter competitions, school programs and events that traditionally run through this period.**

## Human resourcing

COVID-19 resulted in all ACT-based TFA staff being placed on JobKeeper from April 2020; they continued to work from home, keeping connected regularly through remote meeting platforms.

The TFACT Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday 4th February and attended by TFA Chief Finance Officer Garry Foran, TFA Board Member Barry McNamara, TFACT staff members, TFACT STAC members and representatives from the ACT's five clubs. Cindy Toms was appointed as a General Member to the ACT State and Territory Advisory Committee (STAC), with Erin Taylor, TFACT STAC Chair, temporarily appointed to the TFA Board in April. As a result of this vacancy, Sandra Hughes was appointed as the temporary TFACT STAC Chair and Emily Heckendorf appointed to the position vacated.

Gabe Hodges, who had been on secondment from Sport Australia, accepted the permanent role as State Manager of TFACT in November. *[TFA note: Gabe made a significant impact to the operations, leadership and community confidence in the sport.]* Mitch Kent, who had been instrumental in the rebuild period, resigned from his role as Events and Pathways Coordinator in September to return home to Queensland. Mark Barnes stepped into Mitch's role, Brodie Ingram continued as Competitions Coordinator and Kim Wilmshurst commenced as Sports Operations Coordinator in March.

## Participation

While the Senior competition saw a 2% team decline in Season 2 2019, the period saw an increase of 13 Junior teams and all timeslots at the Deakin venue reached capacity. Teams grew equally among boys and girls, which can be directly attributed to the work that had been done in the previous reporting period through the school system.

TFACT held its first ever family competition during Season 2 2019, which was a huge success and we are looking forward to rolling this out again in Season 2 2020.

While the Season 1 competition did not commence in this reporting period due to COVID-19, TFACT trialled a new initiative called TouchFit, in which Touch coaches delivered fitness and skills sessions to 78 participants over six weeks.

## Schools

All school competitions in this reporting period were cancelled due to the pandemic, which greatly impacted participation numbers and conversion rates to organised community competitions. Sporting Schools clinics and free clinics were mostly cancelled for the first half of 2020 and, although there was an overall decrease, TFACT was still able to reach 1,176 children through Sporting Schools programs and 2,654 through free clinics.

## Funding

TFACT once again received Tri-Annual Funding from the Sport and Recreation ACT Grants Program. This funding goes a long way to supporting programs and development work within the ACT. The ACT Government has been very supportive throughout the COVID-19 period, assisting local sport in many areas, with the most significant assistance being the waiving of all sportsground hire charges for winter and summer. TFACT would like to thank Sport and Recreation ACT for their continued support.

## Partnerships

Relationships with the Canberra Raiders continued to flourish pre-COVID-19, with both sporting codes continuing to share resources and advertise program offerings to a combined audience. Canberra Raiders also hosted the NRL Touch Premiership semi-finals at Canberra Stadium during the period, with great attendances from both the Touch and Rugby League communities in the ACT.

North Canberra Touch Club entered a partnership with the North Canberra Rugby League Club, which actively promoted our competitions to their membership. During this reporting period, North Canberra Touch Club entered 17 teams across the Junior and Senior competitions – up from seven in the previous reporting period.

## Pathways

Over the past 12 months TFACT participated in both the National Touch League (NTL) and the National Youth Championships (NYC). Once again, most ACT teams sent to the NTL were Masters teams, with only one Open team (Women's Open) participating. The team placed 7th after going down 7-6 in a





hard-fought quarter final against Sydney Mets (the eventual champions). Pleasingly, TFACT was able to send both a Boys and a Girls team to the NYC for the first time in several years, with Junior participation growth meaning increased interest through the school system.

The 2019 ACT Super League saw an expansion in team numbers, with Goulburn travelling down to play each week. Finals were held at the Gungahlin Enclosed Ovals and games were live streamed. Tuggeranong Vikings were champions in the Women's division and Phoenix in the Men's. Rachel McVicar from the Gungahlin Cats Club was awarded the Female Player of the Series, and from Tuggeranong Vikings Ben Wylie the Male Player of the Series. Hayden Wearne was awarded the Paul Baker trophy for Up and Coming Referee.

#### Events

The number of events that TFACT could run during this period was greatly reduced due to COVID-19. The 2019 Lifeline Touch of Life corporate day was once again successfully run. The most successful event during the period was the National Schools Championships, run in conjunction with School Sport ACT for 12s and 15s boys and girls over five days in October. Jessica Crowe from the ACT received the Encouragement Award and was selected in the Australian Merit team.

TFACT's relationship with the New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) continued to grow and we saw a total of 15 Deakin Thunder teams and four City Magic (new Affiliate) teams represent in NSWTA events. The Deakin Thunder Men's 50s team won the NSW Country Championships and the Deakin Thunder Men's 40s team were runners-up in the NSW State Cup. These results saw a total of 21 players being selected in the NSW State of Origin squads.

TFACT hosted a Southern Conference Gala Day in December, which attracted 46 junior teams from the ACT, as well as Orange, Wagga Wagga, Young and Griffith. TFACT intends to make this an annual event in the lead up to Junior State Cup, as it provides valuable practice for the southern and western NSW Affiliates.

#### Acknowledgements

Four volunteers were awarded with the Trevor Richards Award for their tireless work within their clubs at the Super League Presentation: Angela Donaldson and Nicole Bain from North Canberra Bears; Farah Atallah from Woden Eagles; and Emily Heckendorf from Gungahlin Cats.

TFACT would like to thank STAC members, volunteers, participants and staff for their support and guidance through what has been a very difficult period. TFACT is looking forward to a brighter 2020-21 as we get back on the park and enjoy the sport we love.

#### Gabe Hodges

State Manager, Touch Football ACT



# NEW SOUTH WALES



## TOUCH ASSOCIATION REPORT

**With sadness we must open the report noting the recent passing of New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA's) sitting President Aileen May. Aileen was our first female President and longest serving. Aileen gave over 40 years of service to the sport and is a deserving Life Member of the NSWTA. We all would like to thank Aileen for her service not just to the NSWTA but the game overall. The Board was aware of her illness and admired her determination to soldier on for the benefit of grassroots participation, always giving her absolute best. We hope she left us knowing that our organisation is in both good hands and a strong position. I personally am thankful for the friendship I had with this amazing woman. On behalf of the members, the Board, the staff and especially myself, thank you "Ails" for all that you have contributed to our organisation, you will be missed.**

It would be fair to say that the year 2019-20 would be best described by the New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) as a year of "challenges", though it was not without highlights.

### Human resources

Firstly, early on in a short period of time, three long-standing members of staff left for exciting new opportunities. The loss of Daniel Rushworth, Ricky Hetherington and Matt Kiddle saw a combined 27 years of experience leave the office. During the period, NSWTA also said goodbye to long-serving Finance Director and NSWTA Life Member Tony Doyle, who stood down after serving in the role since 2002. While it was sad to see them all go, the organisation has been blessed with a high calibre of replacements.

Rod Hetherington has come into the Finance Director role and has been on a fast learning curve given the turbulent times we have all endured. His transition into the role was helped by the fact that he has a strong passion for the sport and a good relationship with Tony Doyle.

All new staff have transitioned well, providing excellent service to NSWTA members. Rob Pidgeon, our State Participation Manager, has provided excellent leadership and service to both Affiliates and staff that has carried on from the platform Daniel had laid. NSWTA's completely brand-new Member Services team has been built with both knowledge of the sport and a drive for excellent customer service. The vacancy in the Game Development team was filled with another member of the sport, which nicely rounds off the staff with a good mix of Touch Football knowledge, customer service experience, enthusiasm and the

acknowledgement of the need to continue to grow participation in the game.

### COVID-19 impacts

Obviously the biggest disrupter to the business was the impacts of COVID-19 in the last quarter of the year. Effectively it wiped out 90% of NSW's Season 1 2020 competitions from even starting. This had a significant impact on not only participation rates throughout the period but also the organisation's and sport's finances. Due to the loss of Season 1, the tracking of growth performance against the previous year is impossible. However, based on Season 2 numbers, while there was a decline in Senior teams, NSW Junior numbers again had a significant increase, being up by 248 teams on the previous corresponding period.

While COVID-19 impacted all NSWTA's membership, both on the park and off it, it also impacted staff and the ability to service Affiliates. At the end of the period NSWTA staff were all on JobKeeper, with 10 staff members working three days a week, and senior management working four days a week on pay cuts. The Board during this period were meeting weekly to navigate through the issues and stay up to date with all COVID-19 developments. NSWTA is grateful to the NSW State Government, which provided an unrivalled level of financial support to both the organisation and NSW Affiliates with a funding package that was provided in the reporting period.

On a representative level, NSW also faced numerous challenges: delivering the 2019 Junior Regionals in the snow; running the 2019 State Cup during the bushfires and dealing with air quality issues; the torrential storms that impacted the Junior State Cup Northern Conference and led to the cancellation of the State Finals. COVID-19 also forced the postponement to 2021 of the 2020 State of Origin. This decision was made with support from and consultation with Queensland Touch Football. The cooperation between both entities on this and in other areas has been the strongest it has been for many years.

### Digital changes

Along with the national body TFA, NSWTA shared the challenges and frustrations of our Affiliates in the transition to new competition management and registration platform MySideline. NSWTA staff continue to work with TFA with open and honest dialogue in the areas of concern, not just for NSWTA but for the sport overall. It is hoped that the elements of improvement that all are working on will soon come to fruition. Certainly the promise is there for a superior product to what the sport had before.





The NSWTA Board made the decision to allocate up to \$150k for the development of brand new websites for NSW Affiliates. This was well received by our Affiliates and the benefits that this will derive for both members and the organisations are now starting to be realised. In what has been a challenging year in many respects, this project and the delivery of it by staff and our partner Boo Media has been a shining beacon of what can be accomplished even when things are tough.

#### Acknowledgements

NSWTA would like to congratulate our Rod Wise Medal Winner for 2019-20, Joe Dougal of Balmain Juniors Touch Association. A more well-deserving recipient you would be hard-pressed to find.

Finally, strong Touch Football advocate Joel Caine recently said, "the NSWTA, with the 12 months you've had, should hire yourselves out as crisis management consultants". With the year of challenges that have been out of the organisation's control, he is probably not far off the mark.

Like all of our Touch Footballing community, NSWTA too are hoping for a better 12 months to come.

#### Dean Russell

General Manager, NSW Touch Association





# NORTHERN TERRITORY REPORT



**The 2019-2020 year has been another massive year of growth and change for Touch Football Northern Territory (TFNT), with adversity mixed in. TFNT again focused heavily on school engagement, while still ensuring our Affiliates in Katherine and Alice Springs and our centrally-managed competitions in Darwin, Palmerston and Gove were being looked after. The juggle was challenging at times, but well received by the members and the results continue to show.**

## Human resources

The TFNT team has grown thanks to our partnership with the NRL and a Sport Australia grant, which led to the appointment of Brodie Morcom in a Sport Operations Coordinator role. The creation of this position has seen TFNT service regional and remote communities at unprecedented levels.

George Edols continued in his Sport Operations Coordinator role and drove the growth of Touch Football in schools across the NT, as well as strengthening the partnership with School Sport NT. In her 33rd year of service to TFA, Isobel Appo again worked tirelessly as Business Development Manager, providing exceptional support to operations and the State Manager.

The TFNT Annual Meeting saw one new member elected to the TFNT State and Territory Advisory Committee (STAC), with Tamara Appo joining the committee of Tim Pearson (Chair), Nigel Roy, Michelle Duggan, Mel Whelan, Samantha Pearson and Thomas Edgword. TFNT thanks all STAC members for their extraordinary efforts over this period.

## Funding

TFNT continued to receive crucial support from the NT Government Office of Sport and Recreation through Tier 1 Peak Sport Body funding and the Remote Sports Voucher Scheme. TFNT thanks Debbie Halprin, Client Manager NT Sport and Recreation, for all her assistance.

## Participation

While Darwin competitions grew by 7% and 10% in team registrations on the previous year, growth in full active members across NT was hampered by COVID-19, with two competitions not being able to go ahead during the period.

Upon return from the COVID-19 break, TFNT was grateful to be able to utilise the fields at Territory Rugby League Stadium for the resumption of the Darwin competition. TFNT would like to thank NRL NT, South Darwin Rugby League and South Darwin Rugby

Union for their support and generosity during this time.

## Events

Leading up to March 2020, TFNT successfully held a number of events, including Come and Try Clinics at Leanyer Recreation Park, Casuarina Pool and Nightcliff Pool, as well as the Touch for Heart lunchtime competition in conjunction with the Heart Foundation. TFNT, in conjunction with School Sport NT, ran All Schools tournaments in both Alice Springs and Gove prior to shutdown, and postponed the Top End and Katherine tournaments.

## Schools

TFNT continued to work closely with School Sport NT, seeing four NT teams compete at the School Sport Australia Touch Football Championships in Canberra.

TFNT delivered programs to 46 suburban and seven remote schools, with 4,408 students reached, largely through the ASC Sporting Schools Program and Remote Schools Program.

Field officers delivered Touch Football community programs to 916 participants by travelling to remote communities (including Borroloola, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Woolianna, Daly River, Mililingimbi and Urapunga). Our work in these remote communities is vital for the health and wellbeing of residents. There were multiple other programs cancelled between March and June due to the closure of remote communities and schools restricting visitors.

## Programs

There were many developments in the All Abilities space in the NT, including TFNT developing partnerships with Club House Territory and the Be-Inclusive Games. Throughout the year TFNT participated in multiple events to develop awareness about the inclusiveness of Touch Football, and TFA National Inclusion Manager Graeme Clancy visited Darwin to promote the All Abilities Program and educate TFNT staff in the running of this. George has since run two programs as well as delivered modified versions in numerous schools for special needs students.

## Partners

TFNT is appreciative that the City of Palmerston has continued to support TFNT and have this year provided funding for Junior programs. The organisation is also thankful to Hot 100 FM, which continues to support our marketing across the wider Darwin area.





### Referees

The Territory's referees continue to develop, and TFNT was pleased to have two senior Referees attend the 2020 National Touch League (NTL), with Jason Taylor being upgraded to his Level 6. The period also saw longtime Referee Tim Pearson step over to the Referee Coaching space and he joined the National Panel at this tournament. Up-and-coming Referee Darcy Lawrence attended the 2019 National Youth Championship (NYC) and was rewarded for good effort with a semi-final appointment.

### Pathways

For the first time in TFNT history the territory had Men's, Women's and Mixed Open teams compete at NTL. All three teams competed well in their games and, with numerous junior players in all teams, taking part provided a significant learning experience for them. Coaches Luke Norrington, Hank Solien and Des Fogarty did an excellent job pulling the teams together in a short time, with many players only meeting each other days prior to the tournament.

TFNT again had Girls and Boys 18s teams compete at NYC – the Boys coached by Brandon 'Arlee' Taitua and Jono Schwalger, and the Girls by Ryan Miller and Karen Matthews. Both teams have continued to develop, and it was great to see junior players filtering into Open teams.

TFNT thanks everyone who assisted in delivering Touch Football in the territory over the past year and we look forward to new initiatives in the year to come.

### Nathan McDonald

State Manager, Touch Football Northern Territory



# QUEENSLAND TOUCH FOOTBALL REPORT



**The highlight of 2019 for Queensland Touch Football (QTF) was the re-launch of the QLD State Cup held in November on the Gold Coast, thanks to the support of the City of Gold Coast Council, with a record-breaking 99 teams.**

The 2019-2020 season of course presented its challenges, with significant disruptions to community Touch Football due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the suspension of Season 1 2020 competitions and postponement of the 2020 State of Origin. QTF's resilience remained strong, as staff continued to focus on improving operational procedures and developing resources to support the return to play post-COVID for Affiliates and regions.

The South Queensland and Border Districts (SQBD) region came under a QTF Management Agreement from 1st January 2020. QTF thanks the SQBD Board and Members for the opportunity to collaborate with the region to develop and grow Touch Football. The success of the South Queensland Sharks at the 2020 National Touch League (NTL) in March, winning back the Golden Boot Award, was certainly a sign of many positive things to come.

## Human resources

The QTF staffing structure underwent several changes during early 2020, including the departure of CEO Ben Mannion (January), the appointment (March) and departure (May) of new CEO Corey Bell. Greg Denny filled the interim position of CEO. In January, QTF also welcomed newly appointed QTF Affiliate Services Manager – South Queensland and Border Districts, Mark Tipple, and QTF Affiliate Services Manager – Brisbane, Sam Heath. In February, part-time Finance Officer Colleen Purdy commenced to provide additional financial support.

## Governance

QTF continues to work through the Governance and Operating Model Review that began in March, with the support of the Queensland State Government and McLaughlin Sports Consultancy. Following from the *QTF Governance and Operating Model Review – Recommendations Report*, a proposed Governance and Operational structure was released to regions for review and discussion. Due to delays with outgoing CEOs Ben Mannion and Corey Bell, and changed QTF priorities and resourcing during the COVID pandemic, it was not possible to keep to the implementation plan and timeline originally proposed. QTF will continue to work collaboratively and transparently with members to implement the review recommendations.

## Events

The 2019 NRL Touch Premiership (NRLTP) campaign was a huge success for Queensland, with the Brisbane Broncos Women's and North Queensland Cowboys Men's teams winning the August Grand Finals. A huge congratulations to all Queensland NRLTP teams, staff and supporters. QTF thanks the Brisbane Broncos, North Queensland Cowboys and Gold Coast Titans for their ongoing support.

The state's largest event, the Junior State Cup, held its final year at the Tavistock Street location in Hervey Bay, with over 224 teams consisting of more than 3,200 players, referees, coaches and managers. The event continues to go from strength to strength. Thanks to Fraser Coast Regional Council for their ongoing support. In 2020, the event will relocate to the newly built Fraser Coast Sports Precinct.

The 2019 Junior State Championships, hosted by the Bundaberg Touch Association, were dominated by the host region Central Queensland Bulls, which made it to all finals. Congratulations to participants selected in the Queensland Youth Academy Teams, as well as the Queensland JETS referee program that was selected to attend the Q Youth Academy in February on the Gold Coast.

QLD All Schools is currently in its 38th year and continues to thrive. A record 445 teams attended the event at Whites Hill Reserve, Brisbane, with more than 6,500 participants. Thanks to Brisbane City Council for their support.

The QLD State Cup achieved a record-breaking number of teams after a long hiatus. This event is the premier senior Affiliate competition in Queensland and it catered for all divisions and abilities, including a Touch Football Specialised division. Congratulations to Brisbane Metropolitan Touch Association (BMTA), which took out the overall Affiliate Champion.

## Participation

Senior and Junior Affiliate participation numbers are down overall for the reporting period, which can be expected due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the suspension of Season 1 2020 community competitions. On a positive note, while the sport was running in Season 2 2019, Junior participation increased 3%, while Senior participation remained stable. Event and program participation was also significantly impacted by COVID, with the cancellation of many Junior events across the state.





School Delivered Programs remained strong, even with Term 2 2020 participation lost due to COVID. QTF's Sporting Schools Program continues to thrive, with a 33% increase in Touch Football participation from the previous year, with Term 4 2019 and Term 1 2020 seeing particularly strong growth.

Premier and City Touch commercial competitions were impacted by the cancellation of Season 1 2020 competitions, including Premier Autumn and City Winter seasons and Casuarina Cup.

#### Partnerships

QTF continued its commercial strategy and partnered with several organisations including Hygiene Systems Australia to ensure Queensland competitions returned to play safely. Eckoo, QTF's Official IT Solutions Supplier, continues to provide IT support and drive advancements across the digital landscape.

QTF has also introduced an Apparel Licensing Program and successfully secured seven suppliers for a three-year term. This program is intended to enable Affiliates and teams across Queensland to access quality on- and off-field apparel at competitive prices while protecting the QTF brand.

QTF would also like to thank all our existing partners for their continued support, and acknowledges the ongoing support of the Queensland State Government.

In closing, QTF staff would like to thank stakeholders for their support. Thank you to the QTF Board of Directors for their tireless effort and leadership. Thanks to QTF's staff for their enthusiasm, dedication to the sport and the hard work they have put in over the past year, particularly during the COVID period. It has been an extremely challenging period for our sport and our people, and we look forward to sharing in success in coming years as we bounce back stronger.

#### Greg Denny

Interim CEO, Queensland Touch Football

# SOUTH AUSTRALIA

# REPORT



**Touch Football South Australia (TFSA) experienced significant change in 2019-20, with a management shift due to the departure of Anthony Jennings as State Manager in 2019, resulting in the national office providing oversight of the location. The outcomes of a TFSA review provided an opportunity to look at the operations and plan for future growth in all areas, in line with the strategic direction of TFA.**

Thankfully the operational staff remained consistent, with Renée Bryant (Competitions and Events Coordinator) and Dave Harris (Sport Operations Coordinator) continuing to service all nine Affiliates and running the centrally managed City Touch competition at Park 17.

The TFSA State and Territory Advisory Committee (STAC) saw a transition, with three long-serving members – Mick Gray, Amanda Sheeky and Jane Russo – stepping down. New members Cody Gray, Chloe Watts, Emily Moskwa and Dean Philp joined Stacey Quinn (Chair) and Deirdre Morrow as committee members.

## Competitions

All SA Affiliates were able to achieve equal or increased numbers in Season 2 2019 and participation was trending towards growth until COVID-19 impacted all sports in 2020.

The centrally managed City Touch summer competition saw an increase in teams from the corresponding season, before Autumn and Winter 2020 competitions were both impacted by COVID-19 and unable to run during the period.

City Touch's Junior Term 4 2019 and Term 1 2020 competitions saw an increase in both individual registrations and school team registrations, with the finals series cancelled when the pandemic first hit.

Through Adelaide City Council, City Touch was able to secure the lease and future prospects for Park 17 for the next five years, including a maintenance plan to transform the location into a first-class facility. The acquisition of an infrastructure grant to purchase and install a grey water GAP meter will enhance the user experience to help grow the game in South Australia.

Mount Gambier Touch Association introduced a new six-week competition in February to encourage development and diversity – individuals were placed into teams to mix higher grade players with lower grade.

## Events

TFSA was able to successfully contribute to the running of local events throughout the state. The Your Pod Cup grew in numbers again, with a total of 245 participants across 28 teams from both SA and Victoria competing.

Onkaparinga Touch Association held its first ever carnival, in February, which looks to become an annual event. Eight teams competed, with substantial opportunity for growth in Men's, Women's and Mixed competitions.

Adelaide University Touch Club ran its annual Beach Touch tournament. Only four teams competed, but it was a chance for a modified format to be experienced, and those numbers can be built on.

## Pathways

TFSA provided pathway opportunities for all ages of representative teams, coaches and referees to compete against other states and regions nationally through the 2019 National Youth Championships (NYC) and 2020 National Touch League (NTL).

Two SA Roosters teams competed at NYC, with the Girls team finishing in 15th place and the Boys in 18th. Players, coaches, managers and tour staff represented the state to the best of their abilities and learnt valuable lessons to progress their skill levels for future tours.

Three SA Roosters teams competed at NTL, with Men's Open placing 9th overall, Women's Open 13th, and Senior Mixed 7th, which were commendable results against the best players in the country.

SA referees were once again pivotal at national events, with Amanda Sheeky ranking Top Female Referee in the country at NTL and Jon Hall receiving an NTL Team Award; James Van Gilst was named Team Leader for NTL and also NYC, and he received a Level 5 upgrade.

Many thanks to all coaches who represented the state and developed players throughout the events, and also to Deirdre Morrow who was Tour Leader for both tournaments.

## School programs

Schools programs were once again popular in the state, with a





total of 41 schools and 4,076 students serviced in the reporting period. Considering COVID restrictions impacted Terms 1 and 2 in 2020, these numbers are impressive when compared to the total 5,791 students accessed the previous reporting period. Dave Harris was instrumental in delivering these programs, along with helping to deliver the 'Move it Aus' regional participation program run in conjunction with the NRL.

TFSA also provided clinic and gala day opportunities to school-aged participants, with programs run at Tea Tree Gully (743 students), ACPHER PE week (120 students) and Premiers 'Come and Try' day (89 students). The conversion to organised competitions will be the next progression in the strategic direction.

The Catholic schools competition ran with reduced numbers (235 teams) compared to the previous year, due to poor weather forcing the grounds to close, leading to a shorter competition.

The All Schools competition enabled 20 teams across three divisions (primary, middle and open aged) from 13 different schools to compete, with provisions to grow in future years.

The introduction of a Sports Association for Adelaide Schools Boys Competition to complement Junior growth for males in a school-based competition saw 11 teams from five schools compete before COVID-19, with plans to expand next year.



### Technical courses

A total of eight participants in SA sat the Talent Level Coaching Course that transitioned Foundation Level coaches through to the next level. The progression will aid the development of coaches and also the players within the state.

TFSA also presented two Referee Courses throughout the financial year with a Level 1 course attracting a total of 16 future Referees at entry level and one Level 2 Referee sitting the first online version.

### Partnerships

The Sydney Roosters NRL club ended their agreement with TFSA when their relationship with the state came to an end because they were no longer going to play NRL games at Adelaide Oval. A revision of the state team's identity process will begin shortly, with a consultation to take place.

The Arkaba Hotel relationship continued, with the current sponsorship agreement set to expire in late 2020 with provisions to extend their commitment in process.

The NRLSA relationship continues, with strong integration between the two bodies and plans to further enhance this connection in the future.

### Brad Mitchell

GM – Participation, Touch Football Australia



# TASMANIA REPORT



**The past year can best be described as another year of change and disruption for Touch Football Tasmania (TFT). Gerry O'Dea joined as the new State Manager as Olivia Crawford left, before he departed in November 2019. State operations fell to Des Fogarty alone until a new State Manager, Jeff Quick, was appointed at the beginning of March, just before COVID restrictions hit.**

## COVID-19 impacts

The eight months prior to March had seen Tasmania well positioned in terms of growth. Participation numbers were tracking to deliver small but discernible increases across all sectors, however COVID-19 and the sport's shutdown halted anticipated growth.

Southern Touch saw significant increases in participation over Summer Season – Junior teams grew from 51 to 62, while Senior teams grew from 87 to 102. Yet after seeing steady increases for the previous four straight years for its Winter Season, Southern Touch was unable to operate winter competitions during the reporting period.

Launceston Touch Association saw steady growth in Summer Season team numbers, particularly in Juniors, which grew from 24 to 31 teams. They also ran their first All Abilities Program in January, attended by 10 participants who were coached by James Edmunds. Launceston Touch has committed to continuing this program again next year.

Devonport Touch Association remained steady over summer, with team numbers essentially identical to the previous year.

Burnie Touch Association saw its team numbers drop slightly but overall player numbers remained the same, as the association realigned team numbers to ensure teams ran with adequate numbers for the year.

TFT was not able to deliver any school programs during the terms (Terms 1 and 2) that have traditionally seen the greatest uptake of Sporting Schools sessions in the state. The TFT Schools Series 2020 was another casualty of COVID-19, though TFT looks forward to bringing the event back in 2021 and continuing its growth.

## Funding

Once again, through the support of the Tasmanian Government's Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), TFT received

funding through the State Grants program to continue to grow and expand the sport across the state. Thanks to Al Adams and to Rani Cavaretti from the Community, Sports and Recreation Department for their continued support and assistance.

Additional funding was provided from the Tasmanian State Government to support the ongoing employment of staff at TFT and Affiliates to ensure the continuation of operations during the COVID-19 enforced lockdowns. TFT is grateful for the support and leadership the State Government provided during this period.

## Pathways

With support from TFA, two teams were sent to the 2019 National Youth Championships (NYC), building on growth from previous years, while four teams travelled to Canberra for the 2019 School Sport Australia tournament. Again, TFT were unable to get enough players to send teams to the 2020 National Touch League (NTL), though seven Tasmanians played with teams as diverse as Victoria's Women's Open and Sunshine Coast's Men's 60s teams. Stewart Dracup again coached with Victoria Women's Open, and Des Fogarty coached the NT Women's Open and received an accreditation upgrade to Elite Coach.

While not yet able to travel to a national event, TFT selected teams in Under-18s, 15s and 12s Boys and Girls teams and ran training sessions for these teams to continue player development. Each Affiliate has also been running some specialised training to broaden their talented juniors' skills base.

## Tasmanian events

Tasmanian State Cup was held in February; after a tight contest, Southern Touch finally wrested the Cup from Launceston for the first time in about a decade. In a statistical quirk, Launceston won every female division, while Southern won every male division and the Mixed Open, to take the overall title. The event will look different in 2021, with the reintroduction of a Junior State Cup and the Opens/Senior event moving to a different time of year.

## Technical

Only a few development courses ran during the period. Three Level 1 Referee courses were run in the state for approximately 30 new referees, and no Level 2 or 3 courses. However, Bayley Aziz was able to attend a Level 3 course and receive his upgrade to Level 3 at the Victoria State Cup in February, before Refereeing to a high standard at the Tasmania State Cup the following week. No new coaches were trained this year, although there has been significant development of the existing coaches, and the





groundwork has been laid for a large number of new Foundation Coaches growing our technical base for the upcoming Summer Season.

During the sport's forced shutdown from March to June, TFT took the opportunity to plan new initiatives for the state, including in the skills development and representative space; review policies, procedures and operations; and engage with communities to assess satisfaction levels. New state uniform designs were created, and a state identity created, with the Tasmanian Thunder to brand all Tasmanian representative teams.

We believe TFT is emerging from this year of disruption a more focused and engaged operation that is well placed to accelerate the growth that was evident pre-COVID-19.

### Jeff Quick

State Manager, Touch Football Tasmania



# VICTORIA REPORT



**With the state's bushfire disaster and the ongoing devastation and uncertainty around COVID-19, 2019-20 was certainly one to remember for Touch Football Victoria (TFV). Although there were a number of challenges, there have been many highlights over the past 12 months.**

## Human resources

The Victorian State Council Annual Meeting was conducted on 15th February 2020 and attended by TFA GM – Participation, Brad Mitchell, and delegation from TFV Affiliates. TFV is delighted to continue the appointment of Cecilia Eichler as the Chairperson of the State and Territory Advisory Committee (STAC). Kim Butler, Craig Coleman, Tom Brown and Mitch MacKenzie continue their involvement as members and welcomed new member Tim Crompt.

Staffing in the state office saw some changes. Troy Rolle resigned as Affiliate Servicing and Events Coordinator in March and TFV welcomed Tarryn McDowall to lead the VicHealth-funded Switch (Strengthening Women in Touch Football) program.

Victoria's volunteer network has continued to assist the sport, however experienced decline in the period. Despite the dedication of state and national staff to make positive changes in this area, the COVID-19 pandemic forced TFV to postpone a number of technical courses set to be held across the state.

## Participation

TFV had 159 Senior teams play in centrally-managed competitions over the Summer Season. A total of 195 Senior and 30 Junior teams participated across 16 Affiliate competition locations. The Winter Season was not able to take place due to COVID-19 restrictions across the state.

The Sporting Schools program was presented to 32 primary schools and 18 secondary colleges. TFV staff also delivered junior clinics to 14 additional schools, and supported school-based Touch Football competitions by assisting with referee and coaching development at six schools.

The Victorian Schools Touch Football League (VSTFL) entered its 13th season, with 133 teams taking part. Thanks goes to staff at Associated Grammar Schools of Victoria (AGSV) and Associated Public Schools of Victoria (APS) for their work. COVID-19 forced the competition to finish early, with St Kevin's taking out the title due to their ladder positioning at the time.

## Partnerships

TFV would like to thank Dave Donaghy and the Melbourne Storm NRL club for their continued support. A key outcome of the partnership saw members of the Touch community showcase their skills and programs at several Storm events during the year.

The Commercial Hospitality Group demonstrated their ongoing commitment to TFV by allowing the use of Bells Hotel again for a number of courses and meetings as well the annual Awards Night which was held in November.

TFV would also like to thank Profile Foods for their support.

## Funding

TFV continued to receive significant support from VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) throughout the year. VicHealth has been a long-term partner of Touch Football in Victoria and demonstrated this support through funding for projects tailored specifically to female participation and youth engagement.

Switch has continued to grow over the past 12 months, with 20 active locations in Victoria and growing interest interstate. The program has been successful in building confidence in participants and boosting female participation in social competitions in Victoria. Switch has also proved to be fundamental to the introduction of social female-only competitions at Albert Park and Princes Park Touch. In 2020, TFV was successful in acquiring an additional two years of funding from VicHealth to keep the initiative going.

TFV has continued to grow and refine the Youth in Touch program. Over the past 12 months the program has engaged over 600 participants, developed a team of 10 deliverers and worked with ambassador Ryan Papenhuyzen to tailor experiences to engage and promote youth participation in Touch Football.

## Events

The Victorian Touch League (VTL) entered into its 13th season during 2019. The Melbourne City Lions completed the extraordinary feat of back-to-back Club Champions for winning three of the four divisions (Men's Division 1 and Women's Division 1 and 2). Monash University Vikings took out Men's Division 2.

TFV was thrilled to deliver stand-alone Senior and Junior State Cups again in February. During the period, TFV also supported the delivery of the 3 Rivers Festival, Western Affiliates Cup, Goldfields





Cup, Teachers Games, Rawson Sports Camps and university programs at RMIT, ACU and Victoria University.

Due to COVID-19, the Junior Victorian Touch League could not take place. TFA thanks all of the clubs involved for their cooperation and support during this time and looks forward to expanding this offering to further develop junior athletes.

TFA was represented across 15 teams at national tournaments during the reporting period, including both a Boys and a Girls team in the 2019 National Youth Championship (NYC), and seven Victoria Storm teams at the 2020 National Touch League (NTL).

### Recognition

In 2019, TFA was pleased to recognise the following Life Service Awards at the TFA Annual Awards night: Miles Davine, Sharon Coleman and Craig Coleman. Congratulations to all the other player, coach, referee, administrator and Affiliate 2019 award winners.

TFA would like to thank Victoria's STAC members, volunteers, participants and staff for their support and guidance through what has been a very difficult period. TFA is looking forward to a brighter 2020-2021 as we get back on the park and enjoy the sport we love.

### Ella Squires

State Manager, Touch Football Victoria



# WESTERN AUSTRALIA REPORT



**The 2019-2020 year was on target to be the state's second in a row of growth in Affiliate participation numbers, until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While Junior Affiliate team numbers increased by 17% overall due to new programs at most Affiliates, adult Season 1 competitions being impacted by COVID shutdowns resulted in a 15% total decline in Senior participants for the year.**

Touch Football Western Australia (TFWA) staff wish to thank all Affiliates and volunteers who delivered summer competitions and events in 2019-2020 and especially to those that worked to return with winter competitions after the COVID-19 shutdown.

## STAC

The Western Australian State Council Annual Meeting was conducted on 30th November 2019 and attended by TFA CEO Jamie O'Connor. Two members – Ben Dempsey and Rob McKay – were elected to the WA State and Territory Advisory Committee (STAC), with one position remaining vacant, later to be filled on invitation by Sally Irwin. These new members joined existing members Monique Williamson and Zoe Dacey-Aiken, with Rob McKay elected as Chair.

## Funding

During the period the WA Government conducted a review of funding levels and eligibility across all sports in the state; TFWA was assessed as eligible for funding from the WA Department of Sport and Recreation for another year.

The extension of Healthway sponsorship funding for a further three years (2020-2022) will see this partnership with TFWA continue so the sport can promote the LiveLighter message through naming rights to WA events, promotional signage and activations.

WA-based All Flags Signs and Banners continued their sponsorship deal and excellent service in providing signage and promotional material to promote Touch Football and TFWA Affiliates.

## Schools

COVID-19 restrictions hitting in March impacted school programs and competitions, with many Term 2 clinics and carnivals cancelled. The SSWA Country Week and several other school carnivals were cancelled altogether for the year.

Despite the interruptions, TFWA Field Officers and staff successfully conducted face-to-face clinics and sessions with 13,336 children in school programs across the year, and more than 1,100 children took part in those school competitions that did go ahead. The SSWA School State teams attended the School Sport Nationals in Canberra, with Girls 15s placing 6th, Boys 12s placing 5th and Girls 12s placing 8th.

## Events

The TFWA 2019 LiveLighter Super League Series, held over 10 rounds plus finals, saw 15 teams compete in the Open divisions and three teams in the Masters (50+) division. Champions in the Men's were Perth Brothers, Women's were Fremantle, Mixed were Tompkins Park and Masters were Rosalie. Congratulations to all teams.

The 2019 Junior State Championships presented by Go for 2&5 were for the first time held with the support of the City of Wanneroo. An increase in teams and restructure of age groups saw fantastic support from parents and Affiliates across the two-day event.

February saw the State Championships presented by LiveLighter held once again at UWA Sports Park, Mt Claremont, allowing for expansion and extra facilities from the previous year. Two teams from Singapore added an international flavour to another successful event, which held the team numbers of last year and saw a satisfaction rating of 87% from surveyed participants.

## Pathways

WA toured to the 2019 National Youth Championship (NYC), fielding both Boys and Girls teams, which were successful in winning their respective Alliance Cups, leading WA to be named Leading Alliance State.

For the first time in two years, WA was represented by a team (Men's Open) at the 2020 National Touch League (NTL) in Coffs Harbour. The revitalisation of the representative program was generated by the WA Representative Panel, with Coach Te Reweti Clark-Manahi leading the way. The team enjoyed the event and had some good results considering their lack of experience.

Recognition also goes to WA referees Annabelle Connolly, Rob McKay and Alison Watters for being selected to officiate at the 2020 Youth Trans-Tasman.





A big thank you to the volunteers and panels that assist the TFWA office to operate. The Referee Panel saw the retirement of Chair Pat Elshaw and TFWA would like to thank Pat for his contribution and dedication to Touch Football. Mitch Collins, in leading the Representative Panel, did an outstanding job along with other panel members in the rejuvenation of the rep program. Thanks also to Rob McKay (Chair) and the other STAC members for the tireless efforts and advice.

#### **Warren Smiles**

State Manager, Touch Football  
Western Australia



# THANK YOU TO TFA'S VALUED PARTNERS

## MAJOR PARTNERS

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## OFFICIAL PARTNERS

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## EVENT PARTNERS

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## BROADCAST PARTNERS

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