



# REFEREE REVIEW



# OVERVIEW



In July 2017 the Canberra Referees Community initiated an open forum titled “The Future of Capital Football Refereeing”. The forum was attended by over 70 referees, committee members and Capital Football Directors and Staff.

In 2018 Capital Football launched a broader review that expanded on the outcomes of the 2017 forum and sought to engage the football community in contributing to discussion and initiatives that aimed to enhance the services provided to and by referees in the ACT.

The Review incorporated a multifaceted approach including; forums (the initial forum being completed in July 2017), data analysis, comparisons to other member federation refereeing models and initiatives, community feedback via a survey, and meetings with stakeholders.

Documents related to the Review are available on the Referee Review landing page of the Capital Football website.

The Referee Review outcomes also consider other contributions, including the recommendations of the meetings with the referee community related to safety (outlined in the Referee Action Plan of August 2018), and other initiatives such as the piloting of Temporary Dismissals in local competitions.



# ALIGNMENT TO THE CAPITAL FOOTBALL STRATEGIC PLAN

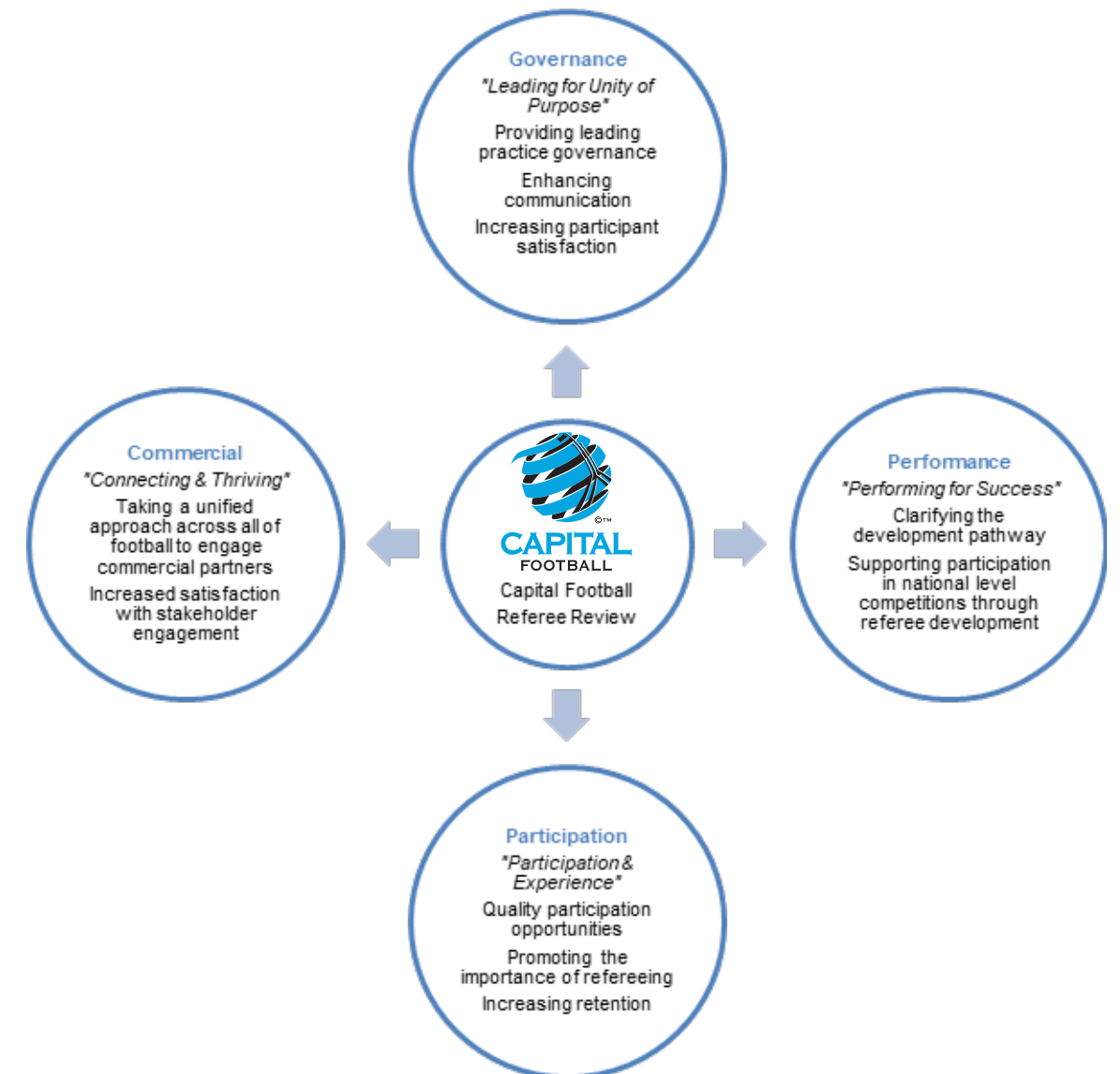
Refereeing touches all aspects of the Capital Football Strategic Plan and the game more generally. The outcomes of this review will have a measurable impact on the broader football community beyond the referees that officiate at our matches.

Areas that we believe will be directly impacted by a renewed and improved focus on refereeing include;

## REFEREE REVIEW GOALS

The goals and outcome we sought via the review were to;

- Recommend a **Governance** structure that delivers optimal oversight and supports referees. The structure should avoid any duplication of responsibility and seek to remove any bureaucratic obstacles to achieving positive outcomes for the football community
- Identify initiatives that will enable the development of a stronger and more supportive **culture** for referees within the Capital Football community
- Address areas in which **safety** is a concern for referees and identify ways to mitigate or remove those risks
- Enhance **communication** between Capital Football and the referee community to achieve a better level of support, collaboration and understanding of policies
- Establish **education, training and development** programs aligned to local performance targets for the region's referees
- Establish **recruitment and retention** strategies that positively engage with referees and the football community





# KEY FOCUS AREAS

Drawing from the outcomes of “The Future of Capital Football Refereeing” forum, the review considered the following Key Areas of Focus.



## GOVERNANCE

- What is the best Governance model, considering our unique market variables, that provides a framework to service the football community (including Board, Management and Committees)?

## CULTURE

- What do we want the culture to look like?
- How do we influence a change in people's behaviour towards referees?
- What initiatives could be implemented to deliver meaningful change?

## SAFETY

- What risks do referees currently face? Why?
- How do we remove or mitigate those risks?

## COMMUNICATION

- Is there anything that obstructs communication?
- What initiatives can we implement to enhance communication between Capital Football and the referees?

## DEVELOPMENT

- What should be our referee development targets?
- How do we achieve these targets?

## RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- What attracts people to refereeing?
- Why do people leave refereeing?
- How do we change our approach to limit churn and increase recruitment?
- Are we providing an appropriate and desirable environment to attract and retain female referees?

## PERFORMANCE & QUALITY

- What should be our referee performance targets?
- How should we measure against these targets?



# REFEREE ACTION PLAN

In August 2018 Capital Football, the Referees Standing Advisory Committee and representatives from the ACT referee community met and agreed an action plan to address increasing safety concerns regarding the verbal and physical abuse of referees in the ACT.

This main focus of this plan involved actions in three key areas:

- ▶ Better Referee Development and Support
- ▶ Improved Incident Management
- ▶ Better engagement between Clubs, Capital Football and the Referees

The details of the Action Plan are further detailed in the media release of 24 August 2018.



## TEMPORARY DISMISSAL PILOT

In 2018 Capital Football piloted Temporary Dismissals in the Capital League and Capital League Reserve competitions. The pilot involved a 10-minute Temporary Dismissal or “sin-bin” for players who showed dissent towards a referee.

Data from the pilot suggested the use of Temporary Dismissals had a positive influence in reducing dissent towards referees, with a reduction in the number of Temporary Dismissals issued in the first six rounds of the competition (19) compared to the final six rounds (11). Only 5 Temporary Dismissals were issued across the finals series.

Data from the Temporary Dismissal referee survey revealed that over 70% of referees agreed that there had been a reduction in the level of dissent from players during matches, resulting in perceived improved refereeing experience.

The feedback provided by referees shows support for the Temporary Dismissal as an extra tool as part of the ‘Steps’ theory in player management, which has shown to have a positive effect on player behaviour.



# OBSERVATIONS



In reviewing the community feedback via the referee survey, comparative analysis to other Member Federation referee administration, local registration

and coverage data, recommendations of the referee action plan and results of initiatives such as the temporary dismissals pilot, we make the following observations.



# KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

## 1. GOVERNANCE

- ▶ There is no one committee structure adopted by Member Federations, with mixes of Standing Advisory Committees, Technical Committees and Youth Referee Committees
- ▶ There is consistency across the country with Referee Department staff being responsible for either administration or development. This is not clearly separated at Capital Football where the staffing is hierarchical with a Manager and Coordinator.
- ▶ Club Referee Coordinators are unique to Capital Football competitions, with Football Association Referee Branches servicing clubs in the larger Member Federations.
- ▶ 56% of the referee survey respondents believe we need one committee providing advice to Capital Football. \*
- ▶ 52% of the referee survey respondents believe the current referee governance structure at Capital Football is sub-optimal. \*

## 2. CULTURE

- ▶ The Key Focus Areas of Culture and Recruitment & Retention are very closely linked given the effect culture has on influencing referees to leave the game.
- ▶ 41% of respondents to the referee survey thought that clubs do not provide an inviting and inclusive environment for referees. \*
- ▶ 35% of respondents to the referee survey described Capital Football referees as unprofessional on the field, off the field or both. \*
- ▶ The top 3 reasons identified in the referee survey influencing a referee to leave the game were; abuse from spectators (21%), abuse from players (19%) and abuse from coaches and team officials (19%).
- ▶ The top 3 reasons identified in the referee survey influencing the underrepresentation of females in refereeing were; abuse from spectators, players, coaches and officials (72%), the environment provided is not welcoming (26%) and time pressures of school or university (16%).

## 3. SAFETY

- ▶ 81% of referees that completed the referee survey indicated they generally feel safe when refereeing, though 59% of referees indicated they had experienced an incident that made them feel unsafe, and that usually occurred once a season.
- ▶ 80% of respondents to the referee survey believe that more severe sanctions for abuse of referees would act as a successful deterrent and create a safer environment for referees. \*



- ▶ 72% of respondents to the referee survey said that having club vested officials assists in providing a safe environment for referees. \*
- ▶ 49% of respondents to the referee survey identified clubs as being “most responsible” for providing a safe environment for referees.
- ▶ The top 3 things identified in the referee survey as likely to make a referee feel safe were; people not yelling at me (25%), presence of club vested officials (22%) and presence of a club referee coordinator (19%).
- ▶ 83% of respondents to the referee survey identified appointments need to be communicated at least 1 week in advance of the match (38% said 1 week, 45% said 2 weeks).
- ▶ 66% of referees who completed the referee survey do not believe Capital Football communication re: refereeing is efficient. \*

## 4. COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Timing of communication of appointments by Member Federations to referees is a challenge nationally.
- ▶ Emails and the referee Team App are the most used forms of communication by referees for information related to refereeing, the referees Facebook page was used the least.

\* Discounting respondents that skipped the question or answered “no opinion”





## 5. DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ The Key Areas of Focus of Development and Performance / Quality are very closely linked considering the majority of our referees are young and inexperienced.
- ▶ 78% of our referees are qualified at the introductory level (level 4 or game leader).
- ▶ The vast majority of our referees are under 18 years of age.
- ▶ 69% of respondents to the referee survey identified Capital Football as the appropriate body to appoint assessors.
- ▶ 65% of respondents to the referee survey identified that Capital Football should be primarily responsible for referee development.
- ▶ Appointment of referees on the advice of a Referee Committee only occurs in the ACT and Tasmania.
- ▶ The 3 areas respondents to the referee survey believe referees would benefit most from additional training are; communication with players (80%), communication with team officials (64%), Laws of the Game (59%).

## 6. RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- ▶ Referee numbers are decreasing year on year, including a 45% drop in the number of referees aged between 18 and 30 from 2016 to 2017.
- ▶ The negative trend in referee registrations is opposed to the majority trend across the country (which is generally seeing referee registrations increase).
- ▶ Female referee registrations are trending downwards at a higher rate than males.
- ▶ Females are underrepresented in refereeing (20% of referees v 27% of players). This is a consistent trend nationally.
- ▶ There is a significant gap between the available and required referees to service the Community Leagues.
- ▶ There is a significant gap between the available and required assistant referees across all leagues.

## 7. PERFORMANCE & QUALITY

- ▶ Respondents to the referee survey identified a combination of written, verbal and visual feedback from Assessors post-match, in evaluation forms and via reviewing match footage as the best method to provide feedback to referees re: their performance (i.e. it needs to be multi-faceted).
- ▶ 58% of respondents to the referee survey identified Club reports as the best way to measure club satisfaction with referee performance.
- ▶ 54% of respondents to the referee survey identified a combination of Assessor and Club reports as the best way to measure referee performance.

*\* Discounting respondents that skipped the question or answered "no opinion"*



# OUTCOMES



The following outcomes define at a high level the structure, programs and initiatives to be established and implemented to deliver the goals of each key area of focus.

Each outcome has been developed considering the current environment and what needs to be introduced or be enhanced given the observations in section 2 of this document.

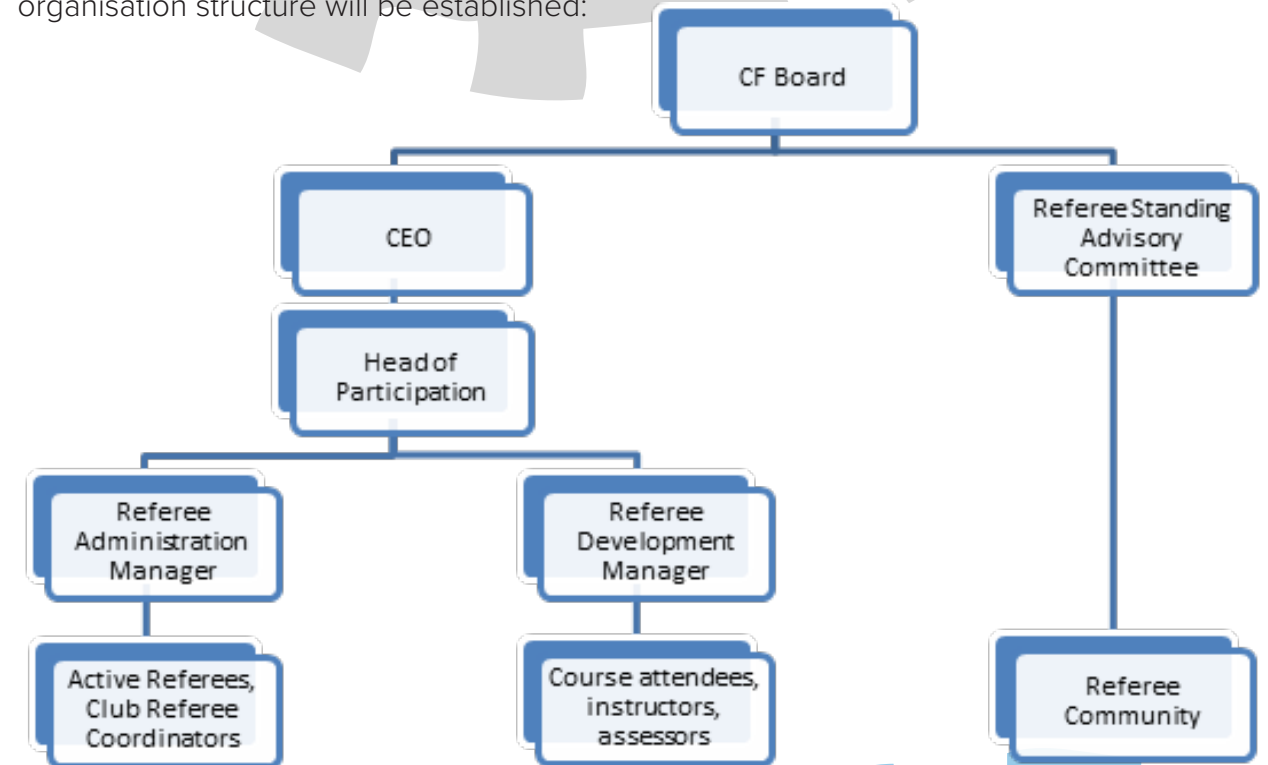


# FOCUS AREA ONE: GOVERNANCE

Recommend a Governance structure that delivers optimal oversight and supports referees. The structure should avoid any duplication of responsibility and seek to remove any bureaucratic obstacles to achieving positive outcomes for the football community.

## ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

While 48% of respondents to the referee survey believed the current governance structure was optimal, we aspire to a greater level of support and satisfaction. With that in mind, the following organisation structure will be established:



The Referee Standing Advisory Committee advocates to the Capital Football Board on behalf of the Referee Community on matters of policy and direction.

The Referee Department delivers all referee operations (administration and development) aligned to the strategic plan of the Capital Football and operational plans developed by the Participation Department.

Referee appointments will be processed by the Referee Administration Manager, as advised by the Referee Development Manager.

Where Referee development used to be driven primarily via the Referee Technical Committee (which is no longer included in the governance structure), the responsibility now sits with a dedicated Referee Development Manager within Capital Football. The Referee Development Manager will utilise the skills and support of a network of instructors and assessors in delivering the development pathway for referees.

## CLUB REFEREE COORDINATORS

Club Referee Coordinators are vital in establishing a welcoming environment for young referees at junior league clubs.

There is also benefits to be realised in Community League, NPLW, NPL Senior and NPL Youth Clubs for appointment of an individual who acts as the liaison between Capital Football, appointed referees and the club, especially on home match days.

Capital Football will better define the role of the Club Referee Coordinators across NPLW, NPL Senior, NPL Youth, Community and Junior Leagues, and establish annual workshops to better prepare Club Referee Coordinators to support referees.



# FOCUS AREA TWO: CULTURE

Identify initiatives that will enable the development of a stronger and more supportive culture for referees within the Capital Football community.

## RESPECT CAMPAIGN

Abuse of referees has clearly been identified as a reason they choose to leave the game. We all agree that football is far more enjoyable with a referee than without, so we must share in correcting the perception that it is “okay” to abuse referees.

Capital Football in consultation with all Standing Advisory Committees will establish a Respect Campaign. The campaign will encompass all leagues. The campaign will consider sanctions for poor behaviour, rewards for positive and changed behaviour, signage, communication and education.

## TEMPORARY DISMISSALS

The temporary dismissals pilot proved effective in curbing the amount of dissent and abuse of referees by players.

Capital Football will roll out Temporary Dismissals in all Senior Football competitions including NPL1, NPL2, NPLW, State Leagues and Masters Leagues.

The successful roll out will require workshops to educate club coaches and training sessions for our referees.





# FOCUS AREA

## THREE:

# SAFETY

Address areas in which safety is a concern for referees and identify ways to mitigate or remove those risks.

## CLUB VESTED OFFICIALS

Club Vested Officials (CVO) are important to provide a safe environment for referees and spectators.

Capital Football will require CVOs at all matches of all leagues, which has been a historic requirement. Compliance will be monitored and reviewed, with mandatory sanctions applied where clubs do not meet the requirement.

Capital Football will develop and deliver a CVO workshop to help educate clubs and CVOs on their core roles and responsibilities in relation to referee safety.

## DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS

The majority of respondents to the referee survey indicated that more severe sanctions for abuse of referees would act as a successful deterrent and create a safer environment.

Capital Football will review the table of sanctions for offences against referees in the Disciplinary Regulations, with the purpose of setting sanctions that act as a deterrent without being disproportionately extreme in nature, and that are applied consistently.

## REFEREE WELFARE OFFICERS

It has been identified that provision of support services to referees is important, particularly where they have experienced incidents of abuse.

Capital Football will establish formal and informal support services for Referees to cover the foreseeable range of issues individual referees may encounter, which could range from help processing critical feedback through to support following a severe incident of abuse.

In the interim, the Capital Football MPIOs and individual members of the RSAC are available for match officials to contact should they feel unsafe or need someone to speak to about incidents, or require any other support.

## CARDS FOR TEAM OFFICIALS

Following the pilot of cards for team officials in the HAL, WWL and FYL, Capital Football will introduce this initiative to the senior age grades of the NPLW, NPL1 and NPL2.

The use of red and yellow cards for team officials in the technical area will make it clearer when someone is officially warned or dismissed from the technical area.



# FOCUS AREA FOUR: COMMUNICATION

Enhance communication between Capital Football and the referee community to achieve a better level of support, collaboration and understanding of policies.



## GENERAL COMMUNICATION

The majority of respondents to the referees survey thought that Capital Football communication re: refereeing was sub-optimal. It was also evident we do not utilise the preferred method of communication to keep referees abreast of relevant information.

Capital Football will review the platforms used for communicating with referees and clearly define their purpose (i.e. regular emails with updates on all referee matters, Team App for communications on fixture changes and appointments, Facebook for social interaction, google drive for resources etc).

Capital Football will develop a written framework that outlines how and why we use different platforms for communicating with referees so that the referee community understands where to find the relevant information.

## COMMUNICATION OF APPOINTMENTS

Approving and communicating appointments is a challenge nationally, influenced by referee availability, re-scheduling of matches, and inefficient systems. The vast majority of respondents to the referee survey believed appointments should be communicated 1-2 weeks ahead of the match.

Capital Football will review the process to appoint referees with the aim of communicating upcoming appointments at least 1 week ahead the match.

This will require referees to commit to the approved appointment process, and provide their availability in advance.





# FOCUS AREA

## FIVE:

# DEVELOPMENT

Establish education, training and development programs aligned to local performance targets for the region's referees.

## ACCREDITATION COURSES

Capital Football will create a referee development plan that includes; a defined pathway for referees, a schedule of annual courses to support ongoing referee develop, a schedule of training to ensure our referees are physically prepared for the challenges they face, and ongoing workshops to ensure our referees are delivering consistent interpretations of the laws of the game.

## FURTHER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There are other areas of education that would prove beneficial in referee development beyond the formal accreditation courses.

To support the holistic development of referees Capital Football will establish a schedule of other education and training for referees including conflict management and report writing.

These courses will compliment ongoing physical training, practical training and workshops on law changes.

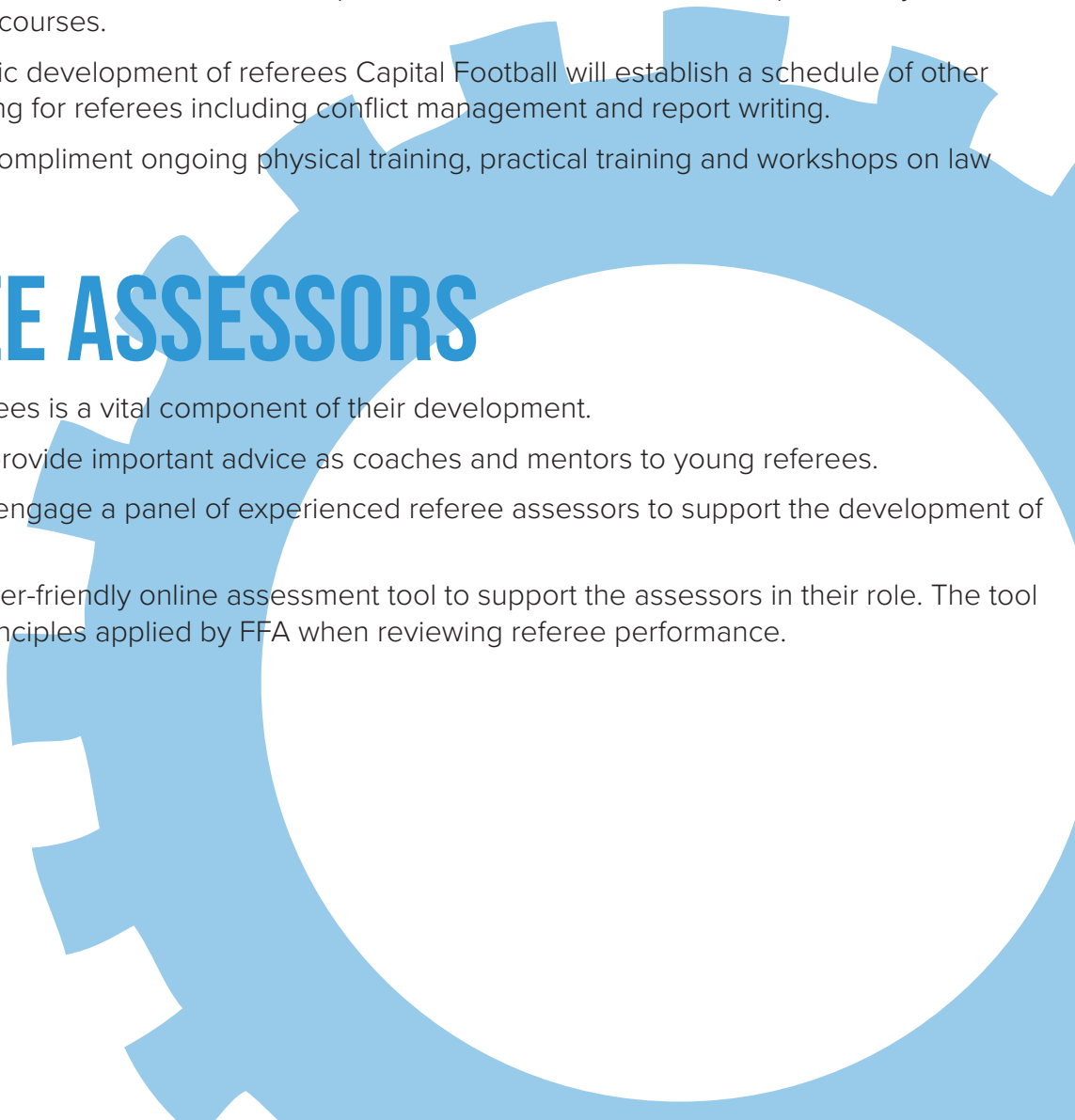
## REFEREE ASSESSORS

Assessment of referees is a vital component of their development.

Referee Assessors provide important advice as coaches and mentors to young referees.

Capital Football will engage a panel of experienced referee assessors to support the development of local referees.

We will develop a user-friendly online assessment tool to support the assessors in their role. The tool will align with the principles applied by FFA when reviewing referee performance.







# FOCUS AREA SIX: RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Establish recruitment and retention strategies that positively engage with referees and the football community.

## UNDERSTAND LAPSED REFEREE MOTIVATION

An alarmingly large number of referees chose to stop refereeing nationally each year.

In order to reduce this trend, we need to better understand what motivates a referee to stop officiating, and what we can do to encourage them to remain or return.

Capital Football will survey lapsed referees to achieve this insight.

## WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR FEMALE REFEREES

Capital Football will survey female referees to understand what changes can be made by Capital Football and clubs to create a meaningful positive change in the environment females encounter when refereeing.

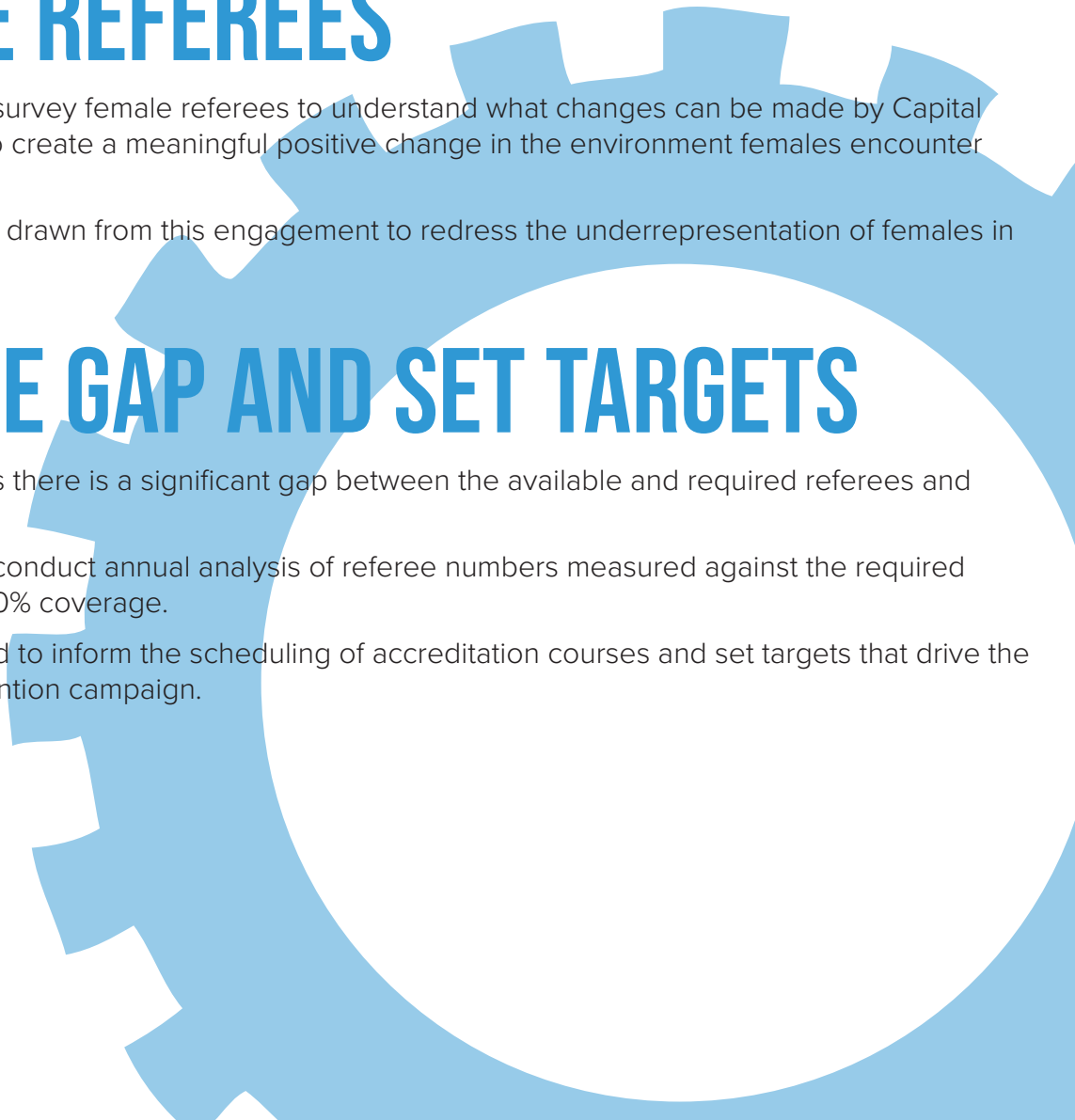
Key initiatives will be drawn from this engagement to redress the underrepresentation of females in refereeing.

## ANALYSE GAP AND SET TARGETS

Data analysis reveals there is a significant gap between the available and required referees and assistant referees.

Capital Football will conduct annual analysis of referee numbers measured against the required referees to reach 100% coverage.

The data will be used to inform the scheduling of accreditation courses and set targets that drive the recruitment and retention campaign.





# FOCUS AREA SEVEN: PERFORMANCE & QUALITY



## REFEREE ASSESSMENT

Capital Football will establish a panel of Referee Assessors.

The Referee Development Manager will oversee the schedule of assessments.

The Assessors will observe referee performance at matches and complete an online form.

Assessor reports will be the primary contributor to the review and appointment of referees.

## CLUB EVALUATION FORM

Measuring club evaluation of referees assists Capital Football in understanding referee performance and participant satisfaction.

Capital Football will develop the online form for clubs to report on the perceived performance of their match officials.

The form will consider similar processes applied in other Member Federations.

The feedback from clubs will be one of the inputs into the broader review and appointment of referees.

## PANELS AND RANKING

Capital Football will prepare annual reports on referee performance for the information of the RSAC and Referee Development Manager.

The reports will consider a number of inputs including assessor reports and club evaluation.

The performance report will inform the establishment of the referee panels for the next season.



# IMPLEMENTATION



The following chart identifies the tasks to achieve each outcome, listed by the relevant Key Area of Focus.

Each task has an individual assigned to deliver it. While that individual may not be responsible for all actions within the task, they are responsible for ensuring it is completed.

The chart does not list every action required, nor the other Capital Football staff, stakeholders, participants or service providers that will be engaged to contribute to each task. It also does not include ongoing actions arising from an outcome of the referees review (i.e. the ongoing schedule of courses beyond establishing and delivering an initial course).

It is anticipated that the Capital Football Senior Managers and Referees Standing Advisory Committee will be actively engaged throughout the implementation process.



## Referee Review Implementation Plan

[illegible]











TASK	ASSIGNED TO	Jan, 2019	Feb, 2019	Mar, 2019	Apr, 2019	May, 2019	Jun, 2019	Jul, 2019	Aug, 2019	Sep, 2019	Oct, 2019	Nov, 2019	Dec, 2019	Jan, 2020	Feb, 2020	Mar, 2020
<b>Quality and Performance</b>																
<i>Referee Assessment</i>																
Prepare monthly reports to inform appointments	RDM															
<i>Club Evaluation Form</i>																
Develop Club Evaluation Form	RAM															
Deliver Evaluation Form workshop and communicate to clubs	RAM															
Prepare monthly reports to inform appointments	RDM															
<i>Panels and Ranking</i>																
Develop process for club evaluation form and assessor reports to be consolidated	RAM															
Annual review of referee performance	RDM															
Draft annual referee performance report	RDM															
Prepare panels for next seasons competition	RDM															

Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Head of Participation	HOP
Referee Administration Manager	RAM
Referee Development Manager	RDM



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