

TO: NPL, NPL2 and MSL1 clubs

FROM: Peter Gome, FFV CEO and Will Hastie, FFV Coaches Standing Committee Chair

DATE: 27 April 2016

SUBJECT: Statement from FFV CEO & Coaches Standing Committee Chair on NPL in 2017 & Beyond Communication Process

FFV CEO Peter Gome and FFV Coaches Standing Committee Chair Will Hastie met on 11 March 2016 to discuss the concerns that the Coaches Standing Committee has in relation to the process that led to the release of FFV's recent memo titled 'NPL in 2017 & Beyond' on 9 Feb 2016.

In this memo, the FFV announced its position on its Men's NPL structure for 2017 and beyond and further referred to a consultation process that occurred between the FFV Standing Committees as per below;

Prior to Christmas we also sought input from the Men's, Juniors and Coaches Standing Committees in relation to the issues listed above.

The issues listed 'above' were:

- *The term of the next participation licence;*
- *The ideal number of Clubs in the competition;*
- *The structure and standard of competition in NPL1; and*
- *Promotion and relegation between NPL1 and Men's State League 1.*

The FFV Coaches Standing Committee were disappointed that the memo appeared to provide the committee's endorsement of the proposed structure announced by FFV management.

The Coaches Standing Committee was requested to provide feedback into the process and submitted the **attached** document in good faith.

No feedback was provided to the Coaches Standing Committee from FFV's Management Team before the release of the Memo 'NPL in 2017 & Beyond.' However, the Coaches Standing Committee did receive a response from the FFV on 11 February 2016 (after the release of the FFV's Men's NPL structure for 2017) in relation to the issues raised by the Committee in the **attached** document.

A copy of FFV's memo dated 11 February is also **attached**.

"Having met with Peter, I am happy that our committee's genuine concerns about this communication have been listened to and that the Coaches Standing Committee's full feedback can now be released to the Victorian Football community," commented Hastie.

"Peter has let me know that FFV could have better communicated the decisions in relation to the new NPL Participation Licence and the Promotion and Relegation system to be introduced between Men's State League 1 and NPL 2 to the Coaches Standing Committee."

"He informed me that despite receiving certain feedback in relation to the number of Clubs currently holding NPL licences, pre-existing contractual arrangements with the current 34 NPL clubs require those Clubs to be offered a further participation licence for a term of 3 years, subject to strict operating criteria."

As a result, no significant structural changes to NPL competitions are presently being considered, aside from the introduction of a Promotion and Relegation system between NPL and MSL, to be finalised later this year and introduced at the conclusion of the 2017 season, again in accordance with pre-existing contractual arrangements.

"Peter has also informed me that the process of feedback to date provides a healthy starting point for the continued review and strategic direction of NPL competitions in Victoria over the coming years".

"As indicated in its memo of 11 February 2016, the FFV Management team has also committed to providing the Coaches Standing Committee with a briefing in relation to stakeholder feedback, licence compliance and the elite player pathway in Victoria. " added Hastie.

"It is the Coaches Committee's view that there are a range of structural issues that need to be resolved for the NPL to deliver on the quality it was established to achieve for Victorian Football. Our committee remains committed to supporting the game through these issues."

"We have provided our feedback for the whole FFV community to review and welcome any further feedback our stakeholders may have on this important issue for Victorian Football."

Peter Gome thanked the Committee for their ongoing input and added "The immediate change on the agenda is the introduction of the Promotion and Relegation system referred to above. Our Management Team is working with representatives from a range of stakeholders including members of the Coaches Standing Committee as part of the working groups established to design and implement that system".



Peter Gome
FFV CEO



Will Hastie
FFV Coaches Standing Committee Chair

Football Federation Victoria
Att: Peter Gome
Level 3, 436 St Kilda Rd, MELBOURNE
By Email

Hi Peter,

Re: Response to your FFV NPLV Memo (NPLV 2017 & Beyond) from 12/11/15

Apologies for the delay in getting the committee's view on the NPLV Memo back to your team.

It has been a difficult time for us to get together and discuss this very important review project for Victorian Football in 2016.

We have provided comments below to the 7 keys areas that your team have requested our feedback.

We have also added seven additional areas, more as questions rather than comment, which are listed as items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. Our feedback is as follows.

1. Number of Clubs

It is the committee's view that the current number of clubs is too high (by a significant amount).

As a result of this, the talent pool at each age level (including Senior Football) has been 'stressed' and a significant drop off in ability occurs throughout the competition. Essentially, the bottom half of each age level is no better than the talent in the FFV Community Competition.

Having too many clubs in the competition also 'stresses' the quality of the coaching through the clubs and a similar pattern to the drop off in playing standard has emerged being that the coaching is no better at some NPLV Clubs than many FFV Community Clubs.

In relation to the method for reducing the number of clubs in the NPLV, we believe this is a discussion for another time.

Our view is that the standards of the participation licence and adherence to them over three years, geography, on field performance and the standard of coaching at clubs largely forms the basis for this reassessment.

These key items/criteria also form the basis for any new applications or new Clubs that may want to be considered for NPLV participation in season 2017.

2. Structure of NPLV1

It is the committee's view that reducing the number of clubs should mean that NPLV 1 does not require a conference structure.

A reduction in teams would mean that there would be two leagues – NPLV and NPLV 1.

Without the benefit of analysis of some key data in relation to optimum NPLV team numbers, our Committee believes that somewhere between 24 and 30 clubs is appropriate for an elite competition in the State. 24 would be more desirable than 30 however we understand that the process of reducing the number of teams will be a complex one for FFV.

At a very rudimentary level, this would mean that 'the game' would be working with approximately 600 players (based on 30 teams) at every age level (approx 5000 players in total across the NPLV) and support approximately 270 high quality coaches and Football Directors in the state.

This item is probably the most important criteria to get right for our game in season 2017 (given we largely have commonality around our National Curriculum and the Coaching qualifications and standards required to teach it).

3. Standard

In all age levels (including Senior Football) it is clear that there is a large gap between the 'better NPLV programs' and those that have significantly dropped away from these clubs (from an on field performance point of view only). When this occurs, the development of the players at the clubs that have dropped away stalls, their enjoyment of their Football is impacted and the parental group becomes very frustrated with their experience with our game. The league tables are a key indicator of this – from a playing standard point of view (we're not saying winning is everything however we do argue that clubs needs to be competitive over the course of the season whatever their style of Football may be).

The committee would ask the question – are these club really NPLV standard clubs or should they be in the 'Community Club' system?

4. Promotion and Relegation

We believe that promotion and relegation is an important part of the competitiveness of a Football competition. To this end, the movement between NPLV and NPLV 1 competitions is clear.

Movement between NPLV 1 and the subsequent winner/s of promotion from Division 1 should be something that is considered every year based on the criteria of participation in the NPLV. Whilst complex, we are sure that a methodology for this can be agreed on before the commencement of the 2017 season.

If a club is relegated from NPLV 1, it could only work if their junior teams are relegated also. This should be subject to the above mentioned criteria for participation in the NPLV and consider all implication for both relegated and promoted clubs.

5. Answered in 4

6. Participation Licences

The committee would be interested to have a briefing from the NPLV Management Team on how all clubs performed when compared to their participation licences over the three years.

The Committee sees no problem in awarding a club a three year participation licence (2017 – 2019) subject to the following conditions;

- 6.1 The club successfully complete/pass an annual FFV review of their compliance to the participation licence (which includes the standard of their coaches and the style of Football they teach); and
- 6.2 The on field performance of their Senior program merits remaining in the competition (i.e they are not relegated).

7. HAL Club Junior Team

The Committee sees no reason to exclude HAL Clubs from all levels of NPLV competition if the number of clubs participating in the competition is reduced.

8. How has the NPLV enhanced the elite player pathway over its three years?

The Committee would like to have a discussion/presentation with the NPLV Management team to better understand if there is any evidence that the NPLV competition has improved talent identification and development in Victoria.

This is obviously a key reason for the competition's creation and understanding this item is important when gauging success or otherwise of the competition

9. NPLV Club 'coach and player turnover'

The committee would like a better understanding of the amount of player turnover that has occurred throughout the NPLV in its three years of existence. With clubs only having one team per age level and running vigorous trial processes every year, we think that this has been a significant negative factor for the game in Victoria.

This is also something that appears to be an issue for coaches.

10. NPLV Club engagement with community clubs

The Committee would like to gain a better understanding of the extent of effort made by NPLV Clubs to engage with their local Community Clubs for the purpose of both coach development and player identification.

Anecdotally, we feel this effort has been limited and causes division between the FFV's NPLV Competition and the FFV's Community Competition.

A Community Club is less likely to support the NPLV model if there is a feeling that they are just a place where NPLV Clubs come to 'take their players'.

11. Process for clubs to apply for new licences to the NPLV in 2017

The Committee believes that all Victorian clubs should have the opportunity to apply again for the 2017 NPLV competition.

This will reinvigorate the standards required for clubs to earn/retain their licence and further provide a strong comparison for the FFV when reviewing the amount to which current clubs have been able to comply with their participation licences.

12. Young (Senior) player development and the points system

As comment, young players not only learn and develop through excellent training sessions and from fantastic coaches but also playing alongside experienced professionals.

The current Senior Team points system does not allow experienced players to continue playing at an elite level where their experience and 'mentoring' will have so much more benefit to young players.

The Committee believes that just like there is an Elite pathway 'up' the development path for Victorian Footballers, there should also be a clear pathway back 'down' that path in order to ensure the experience we have in the State is not wasted.

13. NPLV Junior Fees

The Committee believes that the NPLV junior fees are too high for the inclusion of all Victorian families.

This item has the possibility to exclude some of our talented players from participating in the NPLV on the basis of their wealth which should never occur in our game.

Talent 'leakage' on economic grounds should not exist in Victorian Football.

14. NPLV season 2017 & beyond decision making process for 2016

Our Committee are very keen to support the decision making process and framework for the 2017 NPLV season in 2016. It would be fantastic to obtain some further information from your team in relation to this timeframe, criteria and decision making process.

Peter – we trust that this feedback is valuable to your Management Team and welcome the opportunity to discuss this with them and you in early February.

I will send through some suggested dates for you to consider.

Regards,



Will Hastie
Chair, FFV Coaches Standing Committee
0408 122 933

TO: Will Hastie, Chairman – Coaches' Standing Committee

FROM: Peter Gome

DATE: 11 February 2016

SUBJECT: Response to Coaches Standing Committee

Thank you for your detailed feedback dated 9 January 2016. Please find our response below.

1. Number of Clubs

We have received much feedback, both formal and informal, over the past 3 years in relation to this issue. The majority of that feedback supports the view that the current number of NPL Clubs is either about right or slightly too high. We haven't received any feedback to suggest that the number of clubs should be increased at this point.

Of course it is not unreasonable to expect that existing Clubs would not support a reduction of the overall number of clubs in NPL. What is also important to note however is that the current Participation Licence provides for each licence holder to be granted a further 3 year licence period (effectively an option) provided that the Club is not or has not consistently been in breach of its obligations under the agreement. FFV has made it clear to Clubs that we intend to monitor this closely in 2016.

We appreciate your view that the current number of clubs places a strain on the number of 'quality' coaches currently available. Our view is that the coaching criteria and timelines in place for NPL clubs increases the number of accredited coaches and broadens the talent pool of coaching in general. It is also leading to a substantive increase in the number of coaches from State Leagues seeking higher accreditation.

We agree that the licence agreement to be signed by all NPL clubs is the means for regulating the number of clubs which remain in Victoria's NPL competition.

2. Structure of NPLV1

We don't intend to reduce the number of NPL clubs at this stage. As such, the structure of NPL 2 (2 x conference divisions) will remain the same. The majority of the current NPL clubs support this structure.

We appreciate that it is difficult to determine the optimum number of NPL clubs. We are however of the view that as the game continues to grow in Victoria (13.4% or 7,000+ additional players in 2015) that the right number of NPL clubs will also continue to grow. Notwithstanding, in the immediate future we do not intend to increase the number of NPL clubs.

See also our comments at point 1 above.

3. Standard

We accept that there is a difference in standard amongst NPL clubs and within certain competitions. There is a certain inevitability about that in all competitions at the elite level where certain clubs are better resourced

than others. What we need to do is ensure that the minimum acceptable standard is one befitting of an elite level competition.

It is our responsibility, in both preparing and enforcing the participation licence (and the various obligations therein) to ensure that every club with an NPL licence adheres to the various standards set, especially in relation to areas such as Youth Development, Coaching Criteria and Facilities. We have seen great improvement in these areas over the first 2 years of NPL competition and intend to make sure that the next Participation Licence clearly sets out what is required of NPL clubs in these areas, and that those requirements are complied with and when they are not, action is taken.

In short, Clubs which don't comply with minimum standards should not be part of the NPL and we have made that clear as part of the recent consultation process in relation to the future of the competition.

4. Promotion and Relegation

We agree with your comments and will be working over the next 4 months to design a promotion and relegation system between NPL2 and MSL1. A draft of that system will be circulated to all stakeholders (including the Coaches Standing Committee) for consideration and input.

5. Answered in 4

N/A

6. Participation Licences

We agree with your comments, subject to some clarification around what is meant at point 6.2.

We would be happy to attend the next meeting of the CSC to talk in general about licence compliance.

7. HAL Club Junior Team

Noted.

8. How has the NPLV enhanced the elite player pathway over its three years?

We would be happy to attend the next meeting of the CSC to talk about improved talent identification and development in Victoria.

9. NPLV Club 'coach and player turnover'

We don't have this information readily available unfortunately.

10. NPLV Club engagement with community clubs

Please see point 6 above. We would be happy for the issue of community engagement to form part of the discussion around licence compliance given it is a formal requirement under the Participation Licence.

11. Process for clubs to apply for new licences to the NPLV in 2017

FFV's position in relation to the future of the competition and the next iteration of the Participation Licence is as set out in our statement of 9 February. A copy of that statement was forward to the CSC on 9 Feb.

12. Young (Senior) player development and the points system

Noted.

13. NPLV Junior Fees

Noted.

We will review the ceiling for junior fees as part of the preparation of the next NPL Participation Licence – to be signed by clubs by 30 August this year.

14. NPLV season 2017 & beyond decision making process for 2016

Thank you for your support and the support of the Committee. We are happy to discuss the process and timeline in more detail at the next CSC meeting.

Regards,



Peter Gome
CEO, FFV