



CENTRAL COAST FOOTBALL POSITION REGARDING FOOTBALL NSW AND FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA IN 2022.

Wednesday 26th January 2022

Dear Participants,

For many years CCF have been looking to improve the value proposition for its members. The past two years have brought the CCF board and its clubs committees to realise that there is merit in utilising the registration fees on the coast rather than sending it 'up the pyramid' to be spent on elite football. Football Australia (FA) and Football NSW (FNSW) have provided no compelling reasons to stay in the 'Football Family' and they have shown little knowledge or care towards grass roots football, or the countless hours volunteers put in to make the season a success.

Below is an insight into just some of the reasons why the CCF board and its club's committees, have pushed back against FA and FNSW who have little to no room for compromise.

REGISTRATION

Football Australia has for nearly a decade been developing a registration system. In 2019 after a couple of failed attempts the current National Registration system was introduced—to universal condemnation.

On the back of that failure and the continued non-engagement of grass roots knowledge in developing an appropriate system, the Board of CCF undertook to deliver a comprehensive, integrated Registration and Competitions Management system. This was delivered for the 2021 season—to universal acclaim. FA was advised of our position not to use their registration system.

After several meetings and communication, FA provided an exemption for CCF from using the National Registration system, albeit with conditions. The one condition not agreed to by CCF was the unconditional acceptance and use of any future system rolled out by FA. CCF stated its position for adopting an FA provided solution as “upon the provision of an equivalent or better system”. FA have never directly responded to this.

FA required, and we agreed with, providing them our participant details so that participants are registered in the National Registration database. For the 2021 season CCF offered to supply all participant details as collected via its registration system to FA—this was not taken up by FA/FNSW.

CCF understands and even supports the principle of one National “fit for purpose” Registration system. But is not supportive of a “not fit for purpose system”. It is CCF's stance



in 2021, with respect to the non-use of the National Registration system, that has seen similar concessions given to other FNSW associations.

INSURANCE

CCF notified FNSW in December 2020 that it would not partake in the FNSW insurance program. This program provides coverage for Accident Support, Public Liability and Directors & Officers insurance for CCF and its member clubs.

The background leading to this decision is as follows.

In the years leading to this FNSW reduced the cover provided by their Accident Support policy, with either no or very late communication. In particular.

- The period of cover changed from a full calendar year (1 January - 31 December) to 1 January - End of Season (defined to us as completion of Grand Finals).
- And with that the introduction of a summer football fee regardless of whether the participant had paid a winter football fee or not (historically the one fee covered both as it was in place for a full year).
- Removal of the \$200 per day income support payment.

Further, in discussions with FNSW we were advised that the public liability policy did not cover non-football activities. The specific example discussed is when we let the local school run their cross-country running day at our Pluim Park complex in exchange for us using their car park during finals matches.

The position of FNSW was that we should take out additional policies to cover these shortfalls and continue with their separate summer and winter fees. The Board felt this to be both inefficient and ineffective and thus sought its own comprehensive cover. (The Board also see this as another example of FNSW not providing the service their members require.)

Subsequently, FNSW have revised their policy cover and have reintroduced some of the above benefits, communicated to member Associations on 6 January 2022. These revisions were not advised to CCF at the last meeting of the organisations on 30 November 2021.

We also note that the FNSW correspondence to members states “Given our understanding that CCF’s insurance program is considerably more expensive than that of the FNSW Insurance Program (based on comparing the insurance expense in CCF’s most recent financial statements with the amount attributed to CCF by FNSW)”. To be clear, the insurance expense in our financial statements not only include the additional cover spoken to above, it also includes insurance for workers compensation, property, plant and equipment. Clearly not an “apples for apples” comparison.



We also point out that we, and many other member associations have over many years asked for the breakdown of the insurance costs within the FNSW charged capitation fee. FNSW has steadfastly refused to provide this information prior to last year.

It is also stated “the amount attributed to CCF by FNSW”. How this “amount attributed” has been calculated has not been explained. We hope that the insurance allocation process is not as inaccurate as the allocation process which sees the competitions department of FNSW not bear its full share of costs.

VALUE PROPOSITION (FEES CHARGED by FA and FNSW)

Whilst the preceding two points are best described as works in process, the value proposition is at an impasse. The value proposition concern is not recent nor is it purely an issue raised by CCF.

More FNSW members than not have repeatedly over the years questioned the value proposition provided by FA and FNSW. CCF are merely the first ones to act. This action was not taken lightly but was result of many years of inaction by both FA and FNSW.

FA’s letter to participants lists some twenty items grassroots participants will miss out on by not registering with FA. CCF concedes that the first few items listed have value to a small cohort of its participants. The remainder not so. Subsequently, the letter discusses the value to national teams! Simply put this document confirms that the national registration fee is nothing but a Socceroos’ tax.

In particular the annual statement issued by FA shows that the amount of money received from registration fees increased last year but that the amount returned (by way of grants) decreased. In the year grassroots football cancelled its playing season FA kept the money it collected to fund its elite operation. For FNSW to state in their letter that “the impacts of the pandemic have been especially pronounced on FA” is disingenuous to grass roots football and its participants. Moreover, it shows FA has an unsustainable financial model.

FNSW in 2019 circulated a significant document outlining its value proposition. There is precious little in that document that provides a benefit to the real grassroots football. FNSW continue to issue financial statements that embellish the fiscal position of the different operations. The financial statements as provided overstate the contribution from competitions (by not properly allocating costs) and understate the contribution of grassroots (by clumping it in group called ‘community’) Referees and Coach development are said to be value items provided by FNSW.



However, it must be noted that both referee and coach courses are run on the Central Coast, not by FNSW, but for which we pay an additional fee to FNSW (for their non-involvement).

OVERALL

The decision by CCF not to use the national registration system and the subsequent decision by FA/FNSW not to accept CCF's participant data means that CCF's participants will not be registered with either entity.

However, the vast majority of participants of football on the Coast will continue to enjoy football as they have known it for many years.

Finally, the CCF Board is going through a process of collecting and evaluating ideas of how to best utilise the money NOT wasted with the National and State bodies. In consultation with its member clubs CCF will, in the near future, announce where funds will be re-allocated.



Frequently Asked Questions

Central Coast Football has encouraged its clubs to speak with its participants, collect feedback and collate questions that they wish clarification on considering the recent announcement that CCF won't be affiliating with FNSW or FA for 2022. Attached are FAQs which should put some clarity to the year ahead. It is important to note that 95% of participants will not feel any effects of the changes in 2022. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the CCF office. admin@ccfootball.com.au

Thank you for your support.

Q. Has the deregistration of CCF by FA and FNSW taken effect? If so, what is the plan to work with FA and FNSW?

A. Yes it has taken effect. To work with these bodies, the CCF Board would have to completely reverse its position and agree to the following.

- Adopt and use the replacement for PlayFootball when FA advises it is ready (regardless of whether it meets our needs or not)
- Take up the FNSW insurance policy (and obtain additional policies that meet all of CCF's needs) and
- Pay the capitation fees in full.

Q. Where has the money that CCF have kept from FA and FNSW contributions from registrations for the last 2 seasons gone?

A. CCF have not kept any FA or FNSW contributions from the last two seasons. There is a disputed amount regarding the difference between the FNSW and CCF insurance policies to iron out, otherwise we are up to date.

Q. Where are the funds that we would normally pay to FA and FNSW going to go for this year and will this in the future help reduce members fees?

A. The CCF board has long desired to improve the football experience for our players but has not wanted to increase fees to achieve this. Rather than simply reduce fees immediately (\$29.00 for 5-12 years, \$37.00 for 13-18 years and \$116.00 for 19+ years) we will be developing a strategy in consultation with all our clubs. Initiatives could include addressing issues around the shrinking volunteer base, addressing the referee shortfall, and lowering fees, among many others.

Q. Who does CCF and the Board of Directors report to if they are no longer part of the football family?

A. CCF and the board of directors will continue to report to the clubs as per usual.



Q. Is there still a pathway for elite players?

A. Yes, this hasn't changed. Talented players can trial for the two representative clubs servicing the Central Coast (Central Coast United and Central Coast Mariners Academy) Players are also welcome to trial for clubs outside the Central Coast region as they do now.

Q. How will this decision (deregistration from FA & FNSW) affect the 2022 season?

A. Participation in Champion of Champions, State Cup and FFA Cup is no longer available. Trial games with other association's clubs are very unlikely to be sanctioned by FNSW. Otherwise, we expect to have a normal season.

Q. Will the Mate Preseason Cup still be held in its current format in 2022?

A. Yes it will.

Q. How will this decision affect Central Coast Referees?

A. There is no change. We will continue to develop our local referees as usual and those that excel are free to realise their potential at higher levels of the game if they choose to do so.

Q. How will disciplinary matters which need to be escalated to a tribunal or similar be dealt with? Is there a new policy which participants need to abide by?

A. Internal CCF judicial processes remain unchanged. If a player wished to escalate a matter, it will be heard by an independent (legal) tribunal which will not have a connection to FA or FNSW.

Q. What Member Protection Policy will CCF and its clubs be bound by now?

A. There is no change. CCF will continue to be guided by the NSW Office of Sport (Member Protection Information Officer) and the Office of the Children's Guardian (Working with Children) who administer these programs.

Q. If there is no longer access to the State Cup Champion of Champions and FFA Cup, are there alternatives for teams that may have been eligible to enter? i.e., can clubs still enter the Kanga Cup (Capital Football)?

A. CCF will explore options from other groups such as Capital Football. We encourage clubs to apply to enter external competitions on the understanding their participation may be barred by FNSW.

Q. How does CCF propose to run grassroots, pre-elite and NPL coach education and any on-going training?

A. Grassroots coaching courses will continue to be delivered by accredited trainers. The Advanced Youth C licence, Senior C, B, A and the professional diploma are courses administered by FNSW and are conducted at many venues in Sydney and regional areas. We expect coaches will need to travel to these other destinations to take part.



Q. If CCF are no longer part of the football family, how does this affect access to grants/funding?

A. FA and FNSW will not assist with future funding. The vast majority of grants come from government programs. In the last 10 years or so CCF has received only two grants from FA and FNSW. A \$1,000 COVID grant was received by all associations. The other was via the Football Federation Australia's Community Investment Fund. This fund grants seed funding to assist associations and clubs in being able to seek local council support in addition to making their own contribution. CCF received this grant through the FNSW Facility Fund campaign, Let's Light up Football to upgrade the lighting on No2 Field at Plum Park.

Q. Can CCF provide advice regarding what funding clubs can access and what grants/organisations are these from including which ones we are now ineligible for?

A. According to FA we are no longer eligible for the following.

- Federal and State Government funding programs. This is not true. Federal and State Government grants are available to all, for example the NSW Government's Community Building Partnerships program. A great resource for grants and funding opportunities can be found here. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/search/Pages/research-paper-results.aspx?k=grants>
- Women's World Cup 2023 Legacy Programs - Recent correspondence from FNSW states in part "we anticipate that grants of up to \$1,000 for affiliated Football NSW organisations, will be available" This will not be available to CCF.

Q. Will CCF offer a Facility Fund for clubs to access given they are now may be ineligible for future grants?

A. This is a possible initiative to be considered in consultation with clubs.

Q. Will CCF communicate if there are changes to any previous junior benefits such as pre-sale/discounts for national team tickets etc?

A. Football Australia have already stated in the letter to our members that we will not have access to benefits such as Priority access to Socceroos and Commonwealth Bank Matildas tickets and discounted tickets to Socceroos and Commonwealth Bank Matildas matches during a priority access window. However, anyone can join the FA Football Family directly to receive these benefits.

Q. Will CCF advise and communicate if there are any implications for CCF members regarding FIFA's Women's world Cup in 2023?

A. Any further developments that CCF becomes aware of that affect our participants will be communicated.



Q. Members feel the communication process during the last 18 months of negotiations has been minimal. This has highlighted the communication from CCF to volunteer club representatives and then to registered members is ineffective. Will club and member communication/ consultation be reviewed from CCF to registered members moving forward?

A. CCF has communicated widely with clubs for an extended period and has received ongoing unanimous support. Clubs represent their members, and it is expected committees have consulted widely with them before supporting board decisions. The board will communicate more directly with participants in the future on matters of importance.

Q. Can you explain how the board works to reach a decision to review CCF's relationship with FA and FNSW and who decides which direction is taken?

A. A succession of boards over many years has questioned the FNSW value proposition. The PlayFootball debacle galvanised the current board into action to challenge the relationship with FA and FNSW. Following 18 months or more of robust debate at the board table and consultation with clubs, a unanimous board with unanimous club support proceeded down the current path.

Q. Will CCF lose quality players to the Newcastle and Sydney Competitions due to restrictions imposed.

A. We don't believe so. The restrictions imposed on CCF clubs include non-participation in activities such as trial games and gala days with FNSW affiliated clubs and FA Cup, State Cup and Champion of Champions tournaments. Players wishing to participate in these activities and tournaments will need to travel to Newcastle or Sydney and register with other associations. CCF aims to improve the experience of its participants which we hope will go a long way to retaining them.

Q. Will CCF Clubs leave the CCF to play in Newcastle & Sydney Competitions to sell to their members a broader competition base?

A. This will be up to individual clubs however given the unanimous support received from every club for the actions we've taken plus the prospect of significant improvements possible due to the savings, we don't believe this will occur.

Q. Will aspiring referees leave CCF to referee in the Sydney & Newcastle Competitions to get exposure to potentially enhance their career.

A. They do exactly this now. CCF has developed many great referees over the years who have gone on to bigger and better things. While we hate to lose them, they go with our blessing because we want them to realise their potential.

Q. CCF is currently competing against many private Junior Football Academies who are travelling to Sydney to compete against other academies (will this see local kids leave CCF?)

A. We don't believe so. CCF runs the traditional 11 a side outdoor version of the game. One local academy participates in our competition in preference to travelling. Central Coast



Grammar School recently joined the CCF family, it too in preference to travelling out of area. We will strive to improve the football experience so participants will have even more reasons to stay with us.

Q. Regarding the resources offered by FNSW and FFA, (pathways etc) how are these resources intended to be accessed? Is it the clubs' responsibility to engage directly with FFA and FNSW? Do CCF and FFA/FNSW engage and discuss the provision of these services? It is difficult to access these resources if you don't know they exist.

A. FA and FNSW do not proactively engage with associations, clubs, and participants to alert them of their resources. Their resources are freely available on their respective websites. Note that CCF has been served with a letter of demand from the FA legal team regarding an Intellectual Property infringement. CCF are prohibited from using any intellectual property of both bodies such as the terms Miniroos and FFA Cup and their associated logos.

Q. Should the deregistration take effect, will CCF consult with its members (all 15000) about how those savings could be used? i.e., survey monkey?

A. The deregistration has taken effect. We will engage with our 24 clubs in the first instance, and we encourage players, their families, and all participants to talk to their committees to get some initial ideas on the table. After further fleshing out of thoughts and suggestions we are faced with many proposed initiatives, the entire membership will likely be invited to vote on which ones to adopt and help set some priorities.