

Implementation Plan for the *Respect & Responsibility Policy*

Background

- The *Respect & Responsibility Policy* formally announces the AFL's intention to address violence against women. The broad intention of this Policy is to firmly position the AFL as a leader in advocating cultural change across the entire organisation, and to develop and promote safe and inclusive environments for women, at all levels of Australian Football.
- The Policy's strength lies in its recognition that real change will depend on tackling the culture at a number of levels. In particular, in the words of the AFL's Chief Executive Officer, "it will be about changing attitudes...and will include educating all of our players, executives, coaches, support staff and board members about respect – respect for themselves, for their relationships and respect for the women (and men) around them".
- Importantly, the Policy was borne of the courage of a number of women – both those who spoke publicly of their experiences of sexual assault, and those who contacted the AFL in confidence. Together these women challenged the notion that the allegations were aberrations, and confirmed that addressing the problem would require a broad focus on the culture of football.
- The implementation of the Policy will incorporate a number of activities over a two year period that aim to generate sustainable outcomes for each of the six components.
- The emphasis will be on designing initiatives and program approaches that gain support from within the football community, where Clubs recognise the unique role they play in promoting equal and respectful relationships with women, and see the principles of "responsibility", "respect" and "participation" as key to any foundation on which club culture should be built.
- The six components of the Policy include:
 1. The introduction of model anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its 16 Clubs.
 2. The development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women.
 3. Changes to AFL rules relating to 'Conduct Unbecoming' which cover the specific context of allegations of sexual assault.
 4. The education of AFL players and other club officials with avenues for dissemination of the program to the community level being explored.
 5. The dissemination of model policies and procedures at the community club level.
 6. Development of a public education campaign.

The implementation of the Policy will take place over the next two years and will include the activities proposed overleaf.

<p>EDUCATION PACKAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are three key activities that relate to the development of the education programs that include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> an independent evaluation of the original training workshops delivered to AFL players in 2006; the development of a customised program and dissemination strategy for State/Territory league clubs; and, the development of a second education module to be delivered to players in AFL Clubs. Players who have nominated to participate in future promotional activities as ambassadors or mentors in relation to messages around the prevention of violence against women will also be integrated into educational opportunities . 	<p>RULE CHANGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Policy specifically outlines how the “conduct unbecoming” rule operates in relation to incidents involving allegations of sexual assault. The implementation of the rule changes will be assisted by the development of an instructional “Aid” that will help Clubs meet their responsibilities under the rule changes. The Aid will include recommendations with respect to managing the media response following allegations of sexual assault. The implementation of the rule changes will be monitored and evaluated over the next two years
<p>ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION</p> <p>A model anti-sexual harassment/anti-discrimination policy was developed by experts for the AFL in 2005. This policy is contained in the updated Human Resources, Policy and Procedures Manual that was distributed to AFL staff in August 2007. To breath life into the policy, the AFL proposes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training package incorporating the aims and objectives, and the rights and obligations specified under the anti-sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policy will be developed and delivered to AFL staff nationally. The AFL is also well placed to look at how to build a sustainable family violence prevention program, especially given the current focus on strengthening its human resources systems through the recent executive appointment of a Manager to a “People and Culture” portfolio, and the recruitment of a new Human Resources Co-ordinator. As a first step, training in relation to family violence issues will be introduced through the training package outlined above. The training could then address issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sexual harassment and discrimination workplace violence/bullying family violence 	<p>CREATING A SAFE SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research that documents the growth and experience of women’s participation in male dominated professional sports, especially within the context of AFL will be commissioned to assist with the development of organisational policies and procedures. The review could also explore women’s ‘participation’ within the management and structure of sporting organisations, as well as their experience as players in Clubs and Leagues. It might also include a consultation component. A review will assist with identifying examples of sporting communities (or comparable male dominated professional contexts) that have proactively pursued cultural change in an attempt to foster an environment that promotes women’s safe participation. Some sporting organisations and/or programs, including Womensport and Recreation Victoria, are undertaking activities directed at encouraging women’s safe participation. The AFL could explore opportunities that might exist for partnering with organisations keen to promote positive organisational change with respect to women’s involvement. These activities would ideally inform the development of model policies and procedures that set new standards in shaping a safe, inclusive environment that promotes women’s participation as a positive influence on the football community. The AFL would also consider an appropriate dissemination strategy that would link the implementation of the new model policies and procedures with standards of Club excellence.
<p>PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential of the AFL to effectively market messages of social responsibility is unique. Figures recently released by the AFL showed that one in every 39 Australians is a member of an AFL club. The number of accredited journalists reporting on the AFL exceeds the number assigned to Federal Parliament three times over. The AFL will have direct reference to the findings from key studies commissioned by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) that addressed community attitudes to violence against women, “good practice” in social marketing strategies, and research that estimated the health burden of violence against women in the community. VicHealth has partnered with the AFL to support the implementation of the Respect & Responsibility Policy. The AFL will work closely with VicHealth and other relevant organisations to commission social marketing expertise to produce a multi-media communication strategy to address violence against women. 	<p>DISSEMINATION OF MODEL POLICIES AT COMMUNITY CLUB LEVEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dissemination strategy to accompany the implementation of each component of the Policy is critical for the “respect and responsibility” message to be consolidated and sustainable within Club culture. State and Territory Leagues have had considerable experience in marketing and distributing new products in the context of game development, and in raising awareness around the opportunities for community football to promote messages of social responsibility. The implementation of the policy will draw on this expertise in customising marketing and distribution strategies that are tailored to meet the needs of community clubs.

