



MEMORANDUM

To: **AFL Western District League Stakeholders**

From: **Matthew Ross, Regional Manager**

Date: **7 March 2022**

Re: **Findings – 2021 Allowable Player Payment Reviews**

Dear All,

Introduction

As announced on 21 February 2021, AFL Western District released intentions to review the compliance with the Allowable Player Payment ('APP') rules for the 2021 season. Whilst initially intending to primarily focus on the 2021 premiers, with the cancellation of the seasons prior to their conclusion, it was deemed appropriate to complete these reviews on each competition's top ladder finishers. In addition, one other club was also selected to undergo the review process. Those five clubs reviewed in the AFL Western District region were:

1. HFNL – Koroit FNC
2. MDFL – Woorndoo-Mortlake FNC
3. SWDFNL – Dartmoor FNC
4. WDFNL – Nirranda FNC
5. WDFNL – Kolora-Noorat FNC

No reviews of club compliance have taken place since establishment of the Player Payment Rules in 2017 in the AFL Western District region.

Review Process

The review process was to assess whether any club exceeded the APP threshold for season 2021. For this purpose, it was noted that pro-rated caps were in place dependant on each competition's season length when compared to that originally fixtured for 2021.

A number of documents and financial records were examined, including but not limited to:

- Player Contracts;
- Cheque Books;
- Bank statements;
- Club accounting systems;
- Invoices;
- Financial Statements (including ratio analysis with comparable clubs);
- Team sheets; and
- Historical player payment information (both club and player specific).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each club as well as consideration of other information sources from other stakeholders.

Review Findings

We are pleased to report that from clubs reviewed, there were no material breaches identified. No clubs were found to have exceeded the APP cap as applicable to them.

Minor points of improvements noted through the review process for clubs to consider are listed below:

- Ensuring player contracts are signed by both the player and club representative;
- Ensuring that all senior players have either signed a declaration contract or are listed on the non-declared player payment summary;
- Ensure all player payments are accurately declared on the actual summary including travel components; and
- Ensure discounts applied to playing coaches are calculated correctly (we found examples where clubs did not apply the discount at all, overstating budgeted/actual player payments).

Conclusions

We are exceptionally pleased with the level of cooperation and compliance demonstrated by those clubs who undertook reviews. We received consistent feedback of the support shown by players to their clubs which bucked the common misconception of players are only enticed by money. Players often voluntarily refused cash payments at a time where their club was receiving no revenue.

Whilst reviews cannot consider and probe absolutely every aspect of a club's operation, we feel confident that clubs are motivated to ensure payment levels are sustainable. A nasty relationship split between player/club or player/former partner, can often be a catalyst to uncover instances of non-compliance as has been demonstrated in other regions previously.

2022 APP Process and Reviews

On 9 September 2021, we announced further reviews would be undertaken on 2022 compliance on all competition's senior premiers (HFNL, MDFL, SWDFNL and WDFNL) as well as one further selected club from any competition. There are currently no changes to this intention.

Clubs are reminded that information for the APP for season 2022 is due by 30 April 2022. At time of writing, the PlayHQ system is yet to have the functionality for uploading / storing of this data but we will advise when ready to go. Further resources (templates, policies and procedures) on the APP are available via the [AFL Western District website](#).

Regards,



Matthew Ross
Regional Manager – AFL Western District