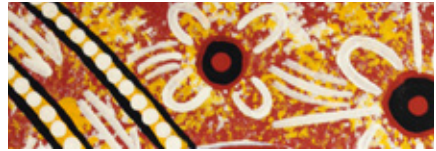
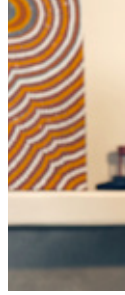


**AFL
PLAYERS**

MANY STORIES, ONE GOAL

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS FOOTBALLERS



The artwork featured on the cover and throughout *Many Stories, One Goal* is by Hawthorn Football Club's, Jermaine Miller-Lewis.

Miller-Lewis began painting at the age of 14, using painting as a relaxation tool.

The painting featured above, and throughout the publication, represents a kangaroo in the middle of the tracks. The kangaroo and tracks are surrounded by people (boomerang shapes) with spears.

The yellow and brown represents the earthy land, where the people are hunting the kangaroo (or malu or yonga).

To see more artwork by Jermaine Miller-Lewis head to:
yellowbidiartwork.wix.com/jermainemillerlewis

**“ WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE
TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE
LAND AND OUR ELDERS BOTH PAST
AND PRESENT. ”**

CONTENTS

LETTER FROM PAUL MARSH	6
AFL Players' Association CEO	
LETTER FROM SHAUN BURGOYNE	7
Chair of Indigenous Players' Advisory Board	
INDIGENOUS PLAYERS' ADVISORY BOARD	8
THE FRAMEWORK	11
INDUCTION	12
Recruitment of a player	
Living arrangements	
Financial considerations	
Home sickness	
OUR CULTURE	16
Cultural considerations	
Family/Kinship	
Industry Indigenous programs	
Key dates	
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT	23
Family support	
Professional development	
Financial planning	
CLUB REQUIREMENTS	27
CONTACT	29
RESOURCES	30

THE FLAGS

An explanation of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags



ABORIGINAL FLAG



The people and the colour of skin



The sun, the giver of life and protector



The red earth, red ochre used in ceremonies and the spiritual connection we have with the land

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG



The land, both above and below the Torres Strait



The people and the colour of skin



The sea, known as the Torres Strait



Ceremonial dancing headdress (also symbolises the Torres Strait people)

Five points of the star represents the five major island groups

The colour white symbolises peace





A WORD FROM PAUL MARSH

It is with great pleasure that we present the second edition of the AFL Players' Association's *Many Stories, One Goal – Supporting Indigenous Footballers Best Practice Guidelines*.

Born from discussion at the 2013 Indigenous Camp, these guidelines were the first of their kind in Australian sport and have successfully empowered staff and industry stakeholders on what can be done to best cater for Indigenous players throughout their AFL career.

“BUILDING ON THE STRONG FOUNDATIONS SET IN THE FIRST EDITION, THE UPDATED VERSION OF *MANY STORIES, ONE GOAL* IS AGAIN DEDICATED TO PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PLAYERS AND IMPROVING CULTURAL AWARENESS...”

Building on the strong foundations set in the first edition, the updated version of *Many Stories, One Goal* is again dedicated to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players and improving cultural awareness – reaffirming the commitment we have to shaping an inclusive industry.

With a new-look AFL Players' Indigenous Advisory Board providing fresh perspective and strong strategic direction, with Shaun Burgoyne and Neville Jetta at the helm, it was time to further develop this document to ensure all Indigenous players are encouraged to grow – on and off-field – in a supportive and understanding environment.

This new-look Board now also includes Allen Christensen, Danyle Pearce, Shane Edwards and Jarrod Pickett – all who have recently joined existing members Chad Wingard and Michael Johnson – and we look forward to working closely with these players into the future.

With more Indigenous footballers playing football at the highest level, it's crucial that we always look to improve programs and services within the industry to make the transition for Indigenous players in and out of the AFL system as seamless as possible.

The AFL Players' Association will continue to work closely with all 73 Indigenous players in the system to implement and promote cultural connections and awareness within clubs and the broader AFL industry.

While the progress we, as an industry, are making is outstanding, there is still much we can be doing to assist all Indigenous players to becoming 'leaders of today for their brothers tomorrow' and these guidelines provide a great foundation for our ongoing work.

Paul Marsh
AFL Players' Association CEO



A WORD FROM SHAUN BURGOYNE

First of all, I want to say what an honour it is to have taken over as the Chair of the Indigenous Players' Advisory Board from, who might be considered, the most influential Indigenous player the AFL has seen, and that I am committed to building on the strong foundation set by Adam Goodes during his time as Chair.

Secondly, I'm proud to be introducing the second edition of this *Many Stories, One Goal* publication, as it represents how far we have come as an industry in learning and understanding the varied needs of all Indigenous players in the AFL system.

Through my experience as a player, I have come to thoroughly understand the importance of Indigenous players having the support of their clubs.

With nearly 10 per cent of the AFL's total playing group identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, it's more important than ever, that the industry as a whole is taking action to best support Indigenous players.

At the 2013 Indigenous Camp, where the idea for the *Many Stories, One Goal* publication was born, it became clear that all Indigenous Australian AFL players hail from such varied backgrounds.

This document provides vital information for clubs to provide a supportive environment for Indigenous players from all over Australia.

Again built on four key pillars – Induction, Our Culture, Personal/Professional Support and Club Requirements – *Many Stories, One Goal* provides detailed information on developing an inclusive workplace.

We, as the Indigenous Players' Advisory Board, look forward to working closely with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players, the AFLPA, all clubs and the wider AFL industry to achieve this.

Shaun Burgoyne
Indigenous Players' Advisory Board Chair

“WITH NEARLY 10 PER CENT OF THE AFL'S TOTAL PLAYING GROUP IDENTIFYING AS ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER, IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER, THAT THE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE IS TAKING ACTION TO BEST SUPPORT INDIGENOUS PLAYERS.”





INDIGENOUS PLAYERS ADVISORY BOARD

During the 2013 Indigenous Camp, of which all Indigenous players attended, the playing group agreed to create an Indigenous Players' Advisory Board to become the voice of all Indigenous players within the Australian Football League (AFL).

The Board consists of a minimum of one Indigenous player representative from Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales, and three representatives from Victoria.



SHAUN BURGOYNE - Chair
Hawthorn



ALLEN CHRISTENSEN
Brisbane Lions



CHAD WINGARD
Port Adelaide



JARROD PICKETT
GWS Giants



MICHAEL JOHNSON
Fremantle Dockers



NEVILLE JETTA - Deputy Chair
Melbourne Demons



SHANE EDWARDS
Richmond Tigers



DANYLE PEARCE
Fremantle Dockers

CALL FOR ACTION

Many of our talented young Indigenous footballers participate in AFL pathways across Australia.

It is vital that organisations providing these pathways invest in understanding each player, making certain they are given every opportunity to establish a football career within the AFL.

The Centre for Aboriginal Studies and Media, Culture and Creative Arts at Curtin University in Western Australia recently conducted research titled *"Assessing the AFL Racial and Religious Vilification Laws to Promote Community Harmony, Multiculturalism and Reconciliation"*.

Assisted by the AFL Research Board, researcher, Dr Sean Gorman, surveyed 400

players and coaches from nine clubs, and further interviewed 99 of these participants.

The research found that investment by all stakeholders in the AFL industry is required to ensure that greater cross-cultural awareness, education opportunities and support are provided to Indigenous players.

In addition, the research highlighted the need for heightened awareness and understanding of the range of cultural issues facing Indigenous players.

A range of recommendations were made based on the findings of this research, including:

1

The introduction of **Indigenous Liaison Officers** at all clubs

2

Cultural awareness training to be implemented across all clubs and administrations

3

Engagement with local Indigenous services

4

Greater acknowledgement of **NAIDOC Week** and promotion of **Indigenous Round**

Consultation with current Indigenous footballers by the AFL Players' Association, further identified a need to provide industry stakeholders with guidance of best practice, to support Indigenous footballers in maximising their football careers.

AIM OF GUIDELINES

In response to this evidence base and recommendations, the Indigenous Players' Advisory Board developed guidelines to ensure consistent support processes are in place for all players.

The aim of these guidelines is to:

- Ensure all Indigenous players are supported consistently, regardless of the club to which they are drafted
- Assist clubs to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through the eyes of players and Indigenous Australians
- Provide the support required to retain Indigenous players in the AFL system and maximise their careers

Four key areas were identified as crucial points of support for Indigenous players, both upon their arrival into the AFL and during their football career.

These key areas included:

1. Induction

Supporting Indigenous players' to transition into the game

2. Our culture

Insight into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

3. Personal /professional support

Individual development and off-field support of players

4. Club requirements

What is best practice?

“**LEADERS OF TODAY,
FOR OUR BROTHERS
TOMORROW**”

INDIGENOUS PLAYERS' ADVISORY BOARD
MISSION STATEMENT



BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS FOOTBALLERS

THE FRAMEWORK



INDUCTION

Supporting Indigenous players to transition into the game



OUR CULTURE

Insight into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture



PERSONAL /PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Individual development and off-field support of players



CLUB REQUIREMENTS

What is best practice?

INDUCTION

Supporting Indigenous players to transition into the game

- Visit to home community
- Relationships with key family member/s
- Induction process
- Appointment of mentor
- Living arrangement options
- Engagement of local Indigenous community
- Financial considerations
- Player agent - best practice
- Homesickness

RECRUITMENT VISIT TO HOME COMMUNITY

Investment in the transition of any player is critically important, and for Indigenous players it is paramount.

A visit to the player's home community prior to and following the AFL draft should be introduced into the recruitment process.

The engagement from key club personnel such as recruiters, Player Development Managers, development coaches and/or a member from the football operations team, helps develop trust through rapport.

It is further encouraged to consider having an Indigenous person strongly connected to the club, and/or a past Indigenous player, attend this visit to assist with building a relationship and trust with the player and family.

The purpose of this visit is for the player's family to be reassured that the player will be looked after by the club. In addition, this presents an opportunity for

the club to be proactive and help the player understand their responsibilities as an elite AFL athlete, and for the club to understand any cultural obligations that may impact the player's personal life and wellbeing.

This is an important process to undertake as the club will in many cases be literally seen as an extension of the draftee's family.

RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY FAMILY MEMBER/S

Following the community or home visit, it is important that the club (ideally the Player Development Manager and/or Indigenous Liaison Officer) creates a strong relationship and remains in regular contact with key members of the player's family. It is considered best practice to make contact with the player's family each fortnight during the transition period. By doing this, a trusted and valued relationship will be created which will benefit both the player and the club in the event of any issues.

INDUCTION PROCESS

During the induction process, it is important the club understands how they can best support the player during their transition.

Clubs should consider engaging a suitable Indigenous player,

and/or a family member, to be involved during the induction process.

This will help the draftee feel comfortable, assist with communication of the clubs' expectations and allow for both players to maintain ongoing and open conversations.

During the induction process, it is important to discuss the player's needs regarding important cultural traditions such as 'Sorry Business', cultural leave and any significant dates on the Indigenous calendar.

In addition,

it is recommended that clubs educate key club staff members on the draftee's cultural background.

This will ensure the club understands the player's needs and will reaffirm to the player that the club understands their culture.

Understanding the player's needs during this time is critical and will assist with planning for off-field requirements, such as understanding the public transport system, paying bills, shopping, cooking and other general necessities.

It must be considered this may be the first time the player will leave their home community for a long period of time and that players may have never used systems such as email or public transport before.



Investing time with the player upon arrival to the club will minimise any uncertainty around this.

Flexibility throughout the transition period is essential as this may be the first time a player has been involved in a structured environment.

It is recommended that clubs assist players in learning time management skills.

During induction, clubs are encouraged to provide the player with an overview of support currently provided to Indigenous players through the industry and internally at the club.

SOME PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER PROVIDING TO THE PLAYER INCLUDE:

1

NETWORKING

2

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION

3

WORK EXPERIENCE

4

VOLUNTEERING

5

PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

APPOINTMENT OF A MENTOR

Upon the player arriving at the club, an Indigenous mentor should meet with the player. This could be a past Indigenous player, and/or a respected Indigenous person within the local community. The club may consider arranging the first set of mentor meetings, with the player and mentor arranging the ongoing meetings from then on. Having a mentor who understands the unique challenges faced by an Indigenous draftee is crucial, as they can act as a conduit between the player and staff/leadership group/administration at the football club.

LIVING ARRANGEMENT OPTIONS

The player should be provided with options for their living arrangements on arrival at the club and clubs should consider living arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Discussions with the player and his family are required to understand what the player's preference is. It is recommended the draftee lives with a senior Indigenous player for the short-term, whilst a host family is arranged. If there is no senior Indigenous player, it is suggested that a suitable senior non-Indigenous player be used.

When allocating a host family, a discussion with the player regarding their desire to live with an Indigenous or non-Indigenous family is important. Engaging an Indigenous host family may help to reduce the draftee's homesickness.

Within the first two years of a contract, talk to the Indigenous player about how they are settling in. If the player appears to be homesick, clubs should consider allowing the player to return home for a short visit. If this is not possible, it is recommended the club provides assistance to the player's family to allow them to travel to the club. These decisions should also be made on a case-by-case basis, for example, some players may benefit from remaining at the club and arranging for key family members to travel.

“IT WAS DIFFICULT. THEY OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T KNOW MY BACKGROUND AND THE [AFL CLUB] DIDN'T KNOW MY BACKGROUND SO IT WAS DIFFICULT. IT WAS DIFFICULT BEING UNABLE TO FEEL COMFORTABLE. IT WAS JUST LITTLE THINGS LIKE WHAT THEY EAT OR WHAT THEY DO ON THE WEEKENDS IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT TO WHAT I DID WITH MY FAMILY ON THE WEEKENDS AND WHAT MY FAMILY ATE.”

- Current Indigenous senior player



ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

When an Indigenous player arrives at the club, it is important to introduce the player to the local Indigenous community via discussions with an Indigenous elder in the area. Facilitating this introduction will allow for the player to connect with their culture on a regular basis and feel a greater sense of home.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important for the player to discuss their financial situation and take part in relevant education.

Some communities have a cultural obligation to 'provide' for family members back home, in particular their elders.

This sometimes leads to financial hardship, so the importance cannot be underplayed. Encourage the player to sit down with their manager and Player Development Manager to work on strategies to assist their family, without putting their own financial health at risk.

This element of cultural obligation is important to understand, so relevant support can be provided to the player if they consider sending money home a priority.

It is critical that the player feels supported to assist their family and/or community. Helping the player to financially plan for the future must remain a priority.

“MY MANAGER PROBABLY SAVED A LOT OF MY FOOTBALL CAREER (MONEY). I WANTED TO WORK WITH SOMEONE THAT I COULD SEE AND ASK QUESTIONS OF EVERYDAY. HE ALSO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO REALLY UNDERSTAND ME AND MY FAMILY.”

- Past Indigenous player

PLAYER AGENT BEST PRACTICE

Player agents play a key role in supporting Indigenous players throughout their career.

It is vital that a strong relationship between the player, player agent and Player Development Manager occurs, and

that consistent support is provided to the player.

Player agents must invest time to understand any cultural considerations the Indigenous player has and develop strong relationships with key family members.

HOMESICKNESS

To eliminate homesickness in young Indigenous players, it is advised that clubs provide the player with an option to visit their family during the bye round and if required throughout the season (recommended twice a year).

Conversations regarding this matter should occur early so that the player is aware they will have an opportunity to visit family in the near future.

It will be up to the club's discretion as to whether this is at the expense of the club or player. When a player is returning to their community, it is also important to remember that there may be some restrictions in training facilities available to them during this time.

Clubs play an important role in helping players through these challenging times. Engaging with the Indigenous players' key figure in their life during challenging times can assist the player in reducing their feelings of homesickness.

OUR CULTURE

Insight into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture

- Cultural considerations
- Industry Indigenous programs
- Key dates



CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every Indigenous player represents their community with pride and it is vital that clubs understand and respect any cultural obligations the player may have.

If unsure of an aspect of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, respectfully asking Indigenous players and their families is acceptable. It is important to discuss the following three cultural obligations with the player and their family.

1. SORRY BUSINESS

Bereavement, known as *Sorry Business*, is a very important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Sorry Business involves time after the death of a member of their community. As with many cultures and communities around the world, death in a community is respected in different ways. Indigenous Australia is made up of many groups, tribes and clans that share similar protocols for the period of mourning for a deceased Aboriginal person. One such protocol is to not mention the name of the deceased as a sign of respect. The *Sorry Business* time period may differ between communities, ranging anywhere from two days, a week, or in some cases a year.

Sorry Business should be discussed during the induction period to ensure the club understands the tradition and what may occur for that particular community and individual. Trust is an important factor when discussing *Sorry Business*. Open communication between the player and club is necessary. The club may also wish to make contact with an elder from the player's community to clearly understand how the club can support the player during *Sorry Business*.

2. MEN'S BUSINESS

The term 'business' describes the relational processes associated with specific patterns and movements within and between communities. It is used to describe the responsibilities and obligations of both Indigenous men and women.

Men's Business is a private, cultural experience. Sacred rituals only involve invited men, with the ritual itself varying from community-to-community.

3. TRIBAL LORE

Tribal lore often differs between individual communities, yet many of the lore's are sacred and not to be spoken about with anyone outside of a given community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lore's are also part of an oral culture, therefore no written code of customary lore's exist. Given the requirements of tribal lore within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, a player may be required to travel back to community to attend a particular hearing. It is important for a club to understand that a player may have additional responsibilities with their community if they are an initiated man. Initiation ceremonies are carried out when boys achieve the status of men. The initiation ceremony differs from community-to-community but often involves sacrifice.

The ceremony and the preparation in the lead-up involves the learning of sacred songs, stories, dances and traditional lore. Many different clans will assemble to participate in an initiation ceremony.



INITIATED MAN

Only boys who have proven themselves worthy of the responsibility of adulthood, mentally and physically, are initiated as men.

The initiation process is a transition rite and there are various stages and ways of initiation.

In most cases limited information is released and taught. Each stage can vary in length, from a few days, a few months or even longer. Physical elements can occur during initiation such as physical harm.

These test the initiate – if the person is unable to endure the pain or initiation requirements, then they may not be trusted with the secrets of the tribe.

It is highly recommended to treat these discussions with the utmost respect and to consider how your club can support a player who may be selected by his tribe to become initiated, or who arrives at your club already having the responsibilities of being an initiated man.

STOLEN GENERATION

Be mindful that Indigenous players at your club are likely to be affected, or have members of their family affected, directly by the stolen generation. Be sure to respect this topic and not talk about it like it is a thing of the distant past. It was still happening in the 1960's.

FAMILY & KINSHIP

Within all Indigenous communities, kinship and family is of utmost importance.

The knowledge of one's own family, and the importance placed upon that, far outweighs the regular kinship structures in the Western world.

Whilst non-Indigenous people live in a family nucleus, Indigenous people value an extended family system.

Indigenous people learn from their extended family how to live and how to treat others and the land.

The kinship structure sets the relationships, behaviours and obligations towards each other. It helps to determine matters of marriage, who will look after children in the case of death, who looks after the old and who looks after people's debts and wrongdoings.

The Indigenous family structure also differs in many ways to the non-Indigenous family structure. In some instances it is the grandparents who do the bulk of the child rearing.

Social obligation and kinship requirements for Indigenous Australians are greater, given the larger and more complex family structure.

For example, in non-Indigenous society the mother is seen as the woman who has given birth to you. In Indigenous culture, the sisters of one's birth mother are also seen and accepted in the same way as a birth-mother.

Extended family cousins are also seen as cousin-sisters and cousin-brothers, once again making the 'nuclear' family somewhat bigger.

When an Indigenous person is accepted into a new community, they are named in relation to the person who accepted them, so that they can work out their own cultural responsibilities within the community.

For example, if a boy is accepted into a community as someone's brother, the parents of the person who accepted the boy into the community become that boy's mother and father too.

An Indigenous person has the same responsibilities to their parent's siblings as they do their parents. Due to this strong sense of obligation within their kinship structure, players can return home on *Sorry Business* multiple times for what is seemingly the same person.





WELCOME TO COUNTRY/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

A *Welcome to Country* is performed by a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person of significance to symbolise the traditional owners giving blessing to an event taking place on the land.

An *Acknowledgement of Country* can be performed by either an Indigenous or non-Indigenous person, and is a statement or speech to show respect to the traditional custodians of the land.

An *Acknowledgement of Country* should be delivered prior to any internal meetings or events where an elder from that land isn't present.

Inviting all players to perform the *Acknowledgement of Country* can be a positive inclusion tool.

CLAN DIVERSITY

It is important for clubs to have an understanding of the diversity between Indigenous clans, languages and skin groups.

The club's Indigenous past players are a rich resource when it comes to understanding community, and providing advice in this area.

Therefore, it is important to keep an up-to-date database of Indigenous past players' numbers and addresses.

COMMON WORDING FOR AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY IS:

"I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the (appropriate group) people, and I pay my respects to elders both past and present."

USE OF LANGUAGE

The use of language is an important consideration.

For many Indigenous Australians, English is their second language, resulting in some barriers in communication between the player and/or family members.

Many male Indigenous Australians refer to other Indigenous men as 'brother'.

It is important to understand this is a respected name calling and you should always seek approval from the person you are referring to prior to using this language.

The same principles apply when considering to use other language used by other Indigenous Australian's when referring to an individual.



Image: Aunty Joy Murphy performs a Welcome to Country as part of Indigenous Round.



AFL INDUSTRY INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS

There are many events, programs and activities within the AFL industry that allow all stakeholders to celebrate Indigenous culture and support Indigenous players.

1. Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round

Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round is an opportunity for all clubs to celebrate the rich history of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

It is an ideal opportunity to engage with Indigenous players and/or local community members to identify activities for the round. It is also an opportunity for non-Indigenous Australians within your club to become involved in the celebrations.

Use this round as an opportunity to deliver positive messages throughout the club's networks and membership base.

Possible club initiatives during Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round are as follows:

- Invite Indigenous players' parents to attend the match
- Engage past Indigenous players in club activities
- Place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags through club materials
- Provide cultural awareness training to club staff and playing group
- Use digital platforms to promote positive messages from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous players and staff
- Use Indigenous artwork throughout digital platforms and club activities
- Engage local community groups to lead an activity during the week

2. Indigenous camp

The purpose of this camp is to provide players with an opportunity to come together with other Indigenous players and to reconnect with their culture.

The camp is also a great opportunity for the group to discuss present and future issues facing Indigenous players.

The Indigenous Players' Advisory Board and Indigenous playing group feel strongly that the Indigenous Camp should become compulsory for all Indigenous players.

The AFL Players' Association stresses the importance of club engagement during this camp.

Club staff are encouraged to attend the camp with the recommendation of having each Player Development Manager and Head of Football Operations in attendance to gain a better understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.



3. Reconciliation Action Plan

Reconciliation focuses on building stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community. The AFL industry plays a critical role in this vision by becoming leaders on the reconciliation journey.

Ideally, all clubs and AFL industry organisations will be actively building and delivering on their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

In establishing a RAP and achieving the goals set, there is great opportunity to engage with current and past Indigenous players, as well as local community members.

It is encouraged that every club has a RAP working group made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous players, along with a diverse range of members from across the organisation.

“OUR CULTURE, IT’S A DIFFERENT CULTURE TO WHAT THEY [NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE] WERE BROUGHT UP IN. I THINK THEY UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT TO WHAT EXTENT THEY GET IT, I DON’T REALLY KNOW.”

- Past Indigenous player

4. Indigenous Liaison Officer

It is becoming increasingly clear that every AFL club would benefit from having an Indigenous Liaison Officer.

Feedback from Indigenous players, along with other stakeholders within the industry, strongly indicate this appointment must become a priority.

This role assists players with any off-field matters and provides guidance to coaches and club staff about how to best to support Indigenous players, their families and community members.

This position works closely with the Player Development Manager and other areas of the organisation to increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

5. Cultural awareness training

It is best practice for all clubs to deliver cultural awareness training. Training opportunities should be made available to all staff and AFL players on an annual basis.

Gauge the interest of any Indigenous players and staff members on being involved in the cultural awareness training process. This will provide them with an opportunity to share their culture, which may result in them providing insight into their family and community.

There are a number of companies that conduct cultural awareness training. For assistance in selecting a provider, contact the AFL Players’ Association Diversity Team.

It is also encouraged that clubs arrange regular cultural activities to increase cultural awareness around the club.



KEY DATES

**Survival Day**

January 26

Commonly referred to as Australia Day. This is not a day of celebration for Indigenous peoples as it marks the day that invasion and dispossession began

Anniversary of The National Apology

February 13

On this day in 2008, Kevin Rudd issued an apology to Indigenous Australians specifically referencing the stolen generations

Harmony Day

March 21

This day is also the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**National Day of Healing
(National Sorry Day)**

May 26

The Bringing Them Home Report recommended that this day be held each year to recognise the forcible removal of children from their families and the long lasting effects that had

Reconciliation Week

May 27 – June 3

This week celebrates and acknowledges the rich culture and history of the First Australians

Mabo Day

June 3

The Mabo Judgement stated in law that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have by prior occupation, ownership of land where native title has not been extinguished

**NAIDOC Week**

First full week in July

This week is about acknowledging the First Australians and mending the bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day

August 4

Each year a different theme is used to highlight a concern, significant issue or hope for Indigenous children

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

August 9

This day is observed each year to promote and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Individual development and off-field support of players

- Family support
- Financial planning
- Professional development



FAMILY SUPPORT

When a player relocates from a community with a young family, it is important to provide additional support to the player and their family.

In many cases within a community, it is the family's responsibility to assist with the upbringing of a child.

As a result, moving away from community can create added pressure. Providing assistance to these players ensures that both the player and their partner feel supported to reduce any homesickness they may be experiencing.

Building a strong relationship and maintaining open communication with both the player and partner is important. The club will then more easily understand the needs of the player and family and be able to provide suitable support to assist them.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The **MAX360** program provides an opportunity for the player, player agents and club representatives to set aside time to discuss and build an individual development plan.

This plan assists the player in understanding areas they require development in, while also maximising their opportunities while in the game.

In some cases, it may be best to work through the 'getting organised' section only to set an action plan for the player.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

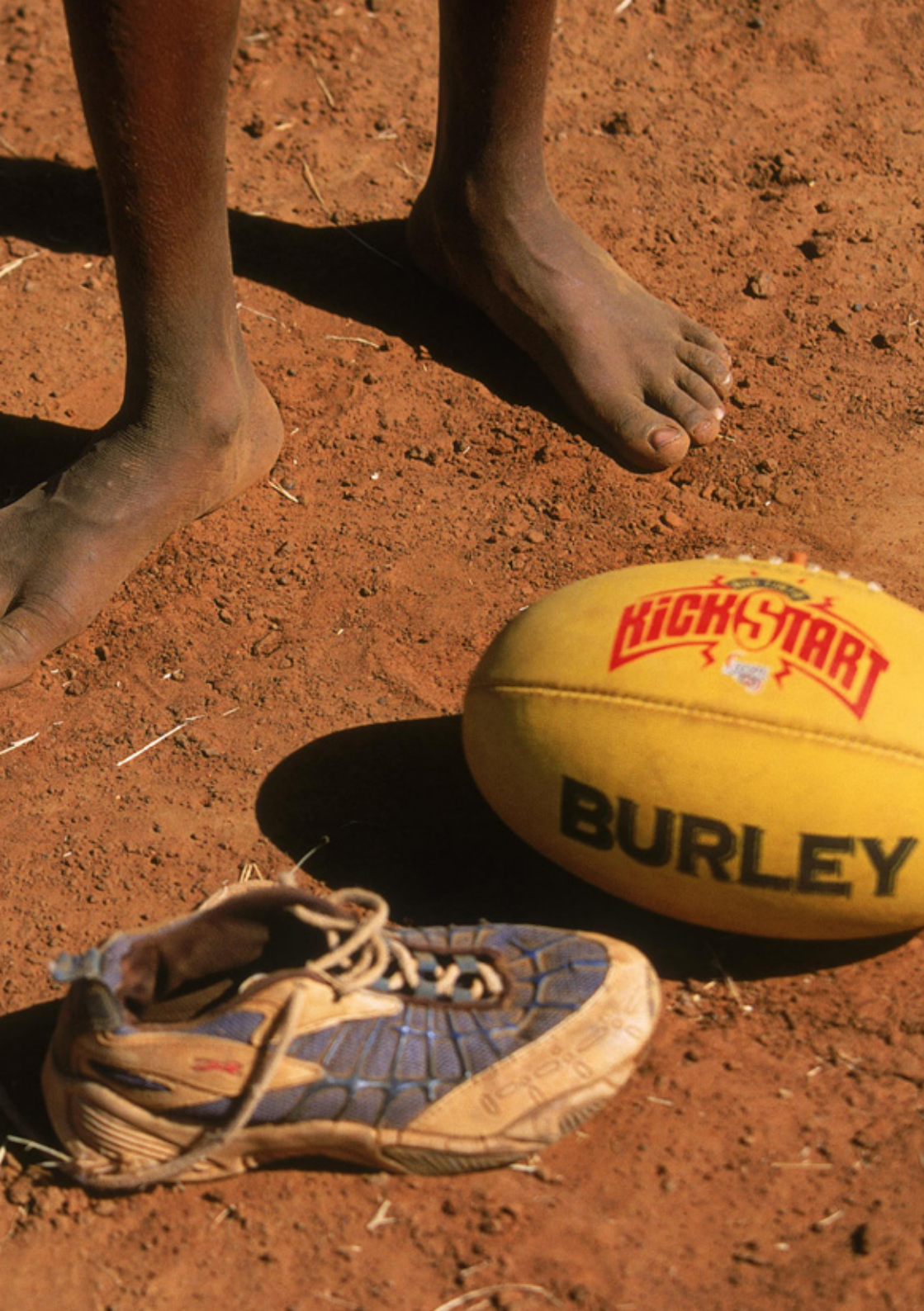
It is important that each player receives ongoing financial guidance and planning assistance throughout their career.

Creating a strong foundation for planning during the induction process is important, however regular reviews and discussion of whether additional support is needed is essential.

The AFL Players' Association provides the opportunity for each player to meet with a financial advisor and discuss their financial plan.

It is recommended that a club representative, player agent and/or a Player Development Manager are across these discussions to ensure all stakeholders are providing required support.







CLUB REQUIREMENTS

**Have you considered how your club supports Indigenous players?
What does best practice look like?**

1 INDUCTION

- ☐ Have you visited the home community of your Indigenous draftee?
- ☐ Do you have a strong relationship with at least one family member of the player?
- ☐ Do you provide an induction resource to new players? Including guidelines of expectations?
- ☐ Do you have an Indigenous host family available if this is a preferred option?
- ☐ Is each player allocated an Indigenous mentor upon arriving at the club?
- ☐ Do you introduce your Indigenous players to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

2 PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

- ☐ Do you offer additional family support for young Indigenous parents?
- ☐ Have you established MAX360 with all Indigenous players?
- ☐ Are all Indigenous players engaged in professional development?
- ☐ Do you have partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to assist players if required?
- ☐ Do you engage past Indigenous players at your club?
- ☐ Do you encourage players to undertake financial planning courses?
- ☐ Do you have a clear understanding of what the players off-field interests are?
- ☐ Have you appointed an Indigenous Liaison Officer?
- ☐ Have you built strong relationships with player agents who manage Indigenous players?

3 OUR CULTURE

- ☐ Is cultural leave covered under your annual leave policy?
- ☐ Do you complete cultural awareness training at least once a year with all players and staff members?
- ☐ Does your club have a Reconciliation Action Plan?
- ☐ Have all Indigenous players attended Indigenous camp?





FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Kelly Applebee
Diversity Manager

✉ kapplebee@aflplayers.com.au



RESOURCES

Insight into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture



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AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

Level 2, 170 Bridport Street, Albert Park, Victoria 3206

P: 03 8651 4300 | E: info@aflplayers.com.au