



## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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### PATRONS:

Gillon McLachlan  
John Hammer  
Susan Alberti AC (Women)



## NATIONAL AFL MASTERS PRESIDENT REPORT 2021

Well after another very difficult year of uncertainty and an ever-changing landscape due to COVID-19 we did manage to play some football across Australia. As circumstances changed day by day and week by week so did each state and territories approach in delivering Masters footy to each fraternity. The main aim of delivering footy to those who wished to play was achieved with a careful and considered approach.

In this very difficult time Zoom and Teams was an invaluable aid to stay in contact with all states and territories which allowed the best possible decisions to be made and achieve the best outcomes. The co-operation throughout the state and territory executives during a very difficult period was outstanding and will no doubt make Zoom a valuable tool going forward.

When COVID-19 hit our shores in early 2020 it put immediate doubt on plans for the 2020 carnival. Our fears were realized mid-year and the National carnival was, for the very first time in our history cancelled. When it was decided that it would again be planned for Perth in 2021 the POC immediately accepted the challenge.

The 2021 National carnival was conducted late September in Perth under the stewardship of WA president Nathan Dixon and the POC. The National board would like to sincerely thank the Perth Organizing Committee for not only managing the event in the absence of the National board but managed to create a fabulous outcome for all the States and Territories who were able to attend. The feedback from the attending states reflected a positively great event in every aspect, and we have nothing but admiration for the POC. Again, thank you to Nathan Dixon and the entire POC.

After 20 years as general manager for AFL Masters Neil King has decided to retire and spent more time with the bat and ball playing Seniors' cricket. We sincerely thank Neil for his time and dedication to our organization spending far more time and effort than expected to ensure the best outcomes for our sport. "Cheers Neil" and good luck with your future, you will be missed.

2021 has also seen the retirement of the Vic Metro general manager Chris Spencer after a long period at the helm and virtually a lifetime of involvement. Good luck Chris and thank you.

Our incoming GM Adrian Raftery has hit the ground running organizing the back office to ensure all systems are in place going into 2022. Of particular note is his work with Sports Australia receiving a \$275,000 grant to develop the women's competitions across Australia. This will allow AFL Masters to increase participation at state and local levels and ultimately National participation. There is a lot of work to be done but we are up for the challenge and confident in a great outcome.

Nationwide in the men's competitions it is business as usual with the season to kick off across the country in the coming months. Although it has been disrupted over the last 24 months, we expect it to rebound very strongly nationwide, which should lead into a very large representation in Adelaide in September. I am sure we are all anxious to get the boots on and have a kick.

We continue to struggle attracting the younger age players to Masters but measures being put in place with social media may encourage more involvement. Life pressures among this demographic does somewhat inhibit the ability to participate however we will continue to work on this area.

Finally thank you to the board and management Ian Fletcher, Andrew Neilson, Pam Andrew, Neil King and Adrian Raftery for the continuing work and input dedicated to AFL Masters.

Onward and upward in 2022 and enjoy “Footy for Fun”

**Steve Eurell**

*President - AFL Masters Inc*





## **NATIONAL AFL MASTERS GENERAL MANAGER REPORT 2021**

This will be my last Annual Report as I retire at the end of 2021.

Unfortunately, over the last two years COVID has had a significant effect on our national and international plans activities and what most of us believe would have been the biggest and best national carnival in Perth 2021. Despite many of the states being unable to enter WA, AFL Masters WA conducted a limited carnival for those states that could attend and from all reports, there was plenty of Football for Fun. Well done to Nathan Dixon and his Organizing Committee and special thanks to WA Tourism for their ongoing support.

Over my nearly 20 years with the national body we have developed a closer relationship with the AFL through Community & International Football Manager, Andrew Hughes. The most significant advance was being allowed to adopt the name AFL Masters.

One of the highlights of our organization was the introduction of Women's Masters AFL in 2016, due purely to the persistence and hard work of Pam Andrew, who has become the driving force behind the women's Masters' program; Pam has become a valuable and contributing national board member.

There is an even greater emphasis on sport being seen as a way of providing better health and community activity. AFL Masters provides enjoyable recreation to our players and their families.

The AFL Masters Board recognises our potential and therefore its responsibilities and is proactive in its role. The Board of Management - President Steve Eurell, Vice President Ian Fletcher and Board members Tank Nielsen and Pam Andrew are very conscious and proactive in achieving our objectives and plan to continue the growth of our organisation. Our new GM Adrian Raftery has been an enthusiastic member of AFL Masters and will be a great asset to the organization.

### **IN CLOSING**

I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure with AFL Masters and thank Steve Eurell and previous President Peter Coffey and the various members of the AFL Masters Board for their full support. I wish the organization every continued success and look forward to the occasional catch-up with you all.

**Neil King**

*General Manager - AFL Masters Inc*



## NATIONAL AFL MASTERS WOMEN'S FOOTBALL DIRECTOR REPORT

The Women's Masters AFL market has continued to grow this year, even though playing opportunities were limited due to the many challenges that marked the 2021 season. This is part in due to the consistent voice of local players and associations who continue to spread the word, and part in due to the optimism and dedication of those who have put in the extra effort to make the most of opportunities as they arose.

Here are a few of the highlight from 2021 that stand out in terms of meeting our goals for sustainable local competition development in each of our states.

- Congratulations to NSW for hosting their first local women's fixture, played in December in Balmain. The response from players was very enthusiastic and the state is hoping to capitalise on this in 2022 by taking the first steps towards a local competition.



- In WA, the excitement of the carnival in Perth has resulted in a record number of registrations and the local competition has expanded to include 6 metro teams and 1 regional team for the 2022 season. WA have also been proactive in building a strong platform for women in their leadership team with an active women's sub-committee and the election of Trish Medwin as their first female board.
- A group of VIC Metro representatives from the 11 local teams in their competition have taken the initiative to form a subcommittee to collaborate on the future direction of the competition. They will work with the Vic Metro board to ensure that the competition grows in a way that meets the needs of female players and celebrates our Footy for Fun ethos.
- South Australia has lots to celebrate after winning a Toyota Good for Footy Gear grant of \$1600, providing a timely boost for their recruitment efforts coming into a home carnival.

They also enjoyed some valuable game time this year with two mini-carnival events, as well fielding the only visiting women's team at the Perth carnival.

At a national level, a \$275,000 grant from Sports Australia will enable the National Board to offer programs to increase female participation in AFLM across Australia. The focus will be on delivering a QuickKick basic skills course, and more Footy for Fun playing options to support our long-term goal of attracting more players into new local competitions and National Carnival teams. Many thanks to the incoming General Manager, Adrian Raftery, for his efforts to acquire this grant.

With all this positive activity, I am anticipating that the National Carnival in Adelaide in 2022 will finally mark the establishment of an Over 40's division in the women's competition. Especially as recruitment for the 2021 Perth Carnival was strong prior to the border lockdowns.

As we consider our achievements this year, and how far the women's competition has grown, I would like to acknowledge and extend my gratitude and best wishes to Neil King, our outgoing General Manager, who has been instrumental in supporting the growth of Women's Masters AFL since its inception. 2021 also saw the departure of Ed Reddin, who made a substantial contribution to our online presence during his short term as the AFLM Communication Officer. I wish him well with his new role with Softball Australia.

I'd also like to send out a big thank you to everyone else who has flown the AFL Masters flag high this year. There has certainly been plenty of action off the field and I expect that the momentum we are building will make 2022 our best year yet.

**Pam Andrew**

*Women's Football Director - AFL Masters Inc*





## NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF UMPIRING REPORT 2021

Firstly, I would like to thank Neil King for his support and cooperation over his tenure as General Manager, I had an excellent working relationship with Neil and I am looking forward to developing the same with the incoming GM Adrian Raftery. Wishing you every success in future ventures and best wishes.

I also wish to thank Steve Eurell and the National Board for their wonderful support, cooperation, and assistance. Without that, simply put my role would not be manageable and I look forward to continuing our strong relationship.

This year we introduced an Umpires Portal which is accessible through the AFL Masters National Web Site, many thanks to Ed Redden for creating this site, it took a lot of research and many hours. Many thanks to all those who assisted with records and information. I also wish Ed all the best with his future endeavours, it was great working with you.

Well done to the Nathan Dixon and the WA Organising Committee for a successful carnival and many thanks to Greg Gilbee, Cameron Douglas and Patrick Abbott from WAFC for managing the umpires. As was the case with many players not being able to attend it was the same for umpires. We had 2 travelling umpires who made it to Perth from SA and NT, the support from the WAFC Umpiring team was outstanding and their involvement was valued and much appreciated.

By the time we get to Adelaide it would have been three years since we had the opportunity to have all States and Territories participating, no doubt everyone is looking forward to catching up. We have had a dedicated group of travelling umpires who have been wonderful servants of the game over many years. Hopefully this year you can all make it to Adelaide and we can reacquire friendships and again have a great carnival.

Adelaide will be like previous carnivals, we shall have a good mix of travelling and local umpires, it's shaping up to be a big carnival and we rely on the support of all.

In closing I wish all States and Territories a successful 2022 season, I look forward to work with you all and coming together for a successful carnival in Adelaide.

**Chris Guice**

*National Director of Umpiring - AFL Masters Inc*





### ***ACT President's Annual Report 2021***

In another year blighted by the virus, the ACT Masters set off down a new pathway in 2021, marking a crossroads for mature-aged footballers in Canberra. Ever since its inception in the 1980s, ACT Masters had never been quite able to establish the interest, the players, and the support structures necessary to set up a masters competition. But this year all that changed.

In July, the ACT Masters kicked off a pilot four-game competition, the Canberra Heart Mind & Soul Cup, bringing together four Canberra teams—the ACT Masters Cockies, the Weston Creek Wildcats, the Honeybadgers from the Australian Staff College Weston and the Australian National University's Griffins—in a 4-round schedule of live streamed (by [Cluch TV](#)) double-header games under lights on a Friday night each month through to October.



*ACT Masters v Defence, RMC Duntroon, Remembrance Day 2021*

The inaugural games went off without a hitch, despite freezing torrential rain—the weather was so bad in fact that the weekend's games, except ours, were called off. The only game in town indeed—but then lockdowns struck soon after, bringing all footy to an abrupt halt. A great shame, but all this year's hard work by many but especially coach Brendan Greenwood, the driving force behind the competition, has left the ACT Masters with the infrastructure and enthusiasm—finances are as healthy as ever and so too membership—in place to make 2022's competition the launch pad to transform masters footy in Canberra. Thanks also to AFL Canberra and major sponsor Elysium EPL—without their great support the competition wouldn't have got off ground.

Plenty of annual events also went ahead as near-normal. The Murray Crays came up from Wodonga in March to start the season with a bang. Here's to many more trips up and down the Hume Hwy. The ACT mini-carnival in May was a hit too, with Sydney visitors the Wombats joining in with locals ANU, Wild Cats and the Cockies. On Remembrance Day, the ACT matched up against



*Speed kills, Taimus gets on his bike*

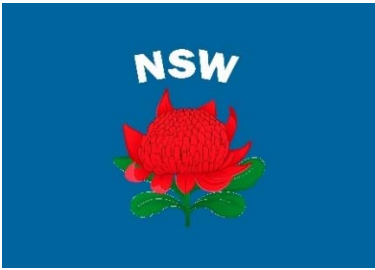


*Decisiveness, ACT Masters coach Brendan Greenwood on the move*

an armed forces XVIII at Royal Military College, Duntroon. The year ended with another bang—about 80 old blokes (and a good few of their sons, daughters and grandsons) turned out for the annual summer carnival held in honour of the late Rob Nisbet. This year's was extra special, marking ten year's since Blouse's passing. He was an inspiration and left a rock-solid legacy. No doubt he would be proud to see what we've built on it.

**Matt Gately**

*President - AFL Masters ACT Inc*



## ***NSW President's Annual Report 2021***

Another different season this year. We started positive thinking we would get to a national carnival, basically we only got to complete half a season.

With numbers looking up across most teams it looked like we were in for a strong bounce back year, starting with a trip to Newcastle, however, as we are starting to get used to, our season was cut short due to the NSW lockdown.

This also meant that the National carnival was a long shot, whilst we prepared with hope that we would attend, we ultimately ended up making the decision to withdraw.

While I write this I feel like déjà vu from previous years but 2022 is looking strong. Matt has done some fantastic work on getting interest from the south coast, Blue Mountains are looking to return the fold, interest from More Sydney AFL Clubs, North Coast under passionate leadership and our relationship with NSW/ACT getting stronger.

We will return to national carnivals with the trip to South Australia in October.

Whilst I will stand for president today it is with the intent of this being my last tenure, using the next year as a transition period to a new president.

I must thank the outgoing committee members especially Cathy, who has done a fantastic job as our treasurer. Also to Livo for reaching out and taken on the secretary role. Lastly the silent one, Steve Coleman who has been the Public Officer for at least the last 5 years.

With focused plans in 2022, New South Wales AFL Masters will continue to grow from strength to strength.

**Bryan Minns**

*President – New South Wales AFL Masters Inc*



## ***Northern Territory President's Annual Report 2021***

The NT enjoyed a great season in 2021. Eight scheduled games, 9s Carnival and National Carnival. Pre-season started after Easter and first two rounds played in good spirits.

With no Bali 9s this year we organised the Darwin 9s to replace it. We had 20 interstate players and many locals to form 10 teams. Played over the Queen's Birthday long weekend at TIO Stadium, in two age divisions all players had a great time.

The next 6 rounds and a Beach Game saw out the season with players ready to take on the National Carnival in Perth. We took 2 Teams to WA and enjoyed some great hospitality, football and carnival atmosphere. Well done to WA for a great carnival.

Looking forward to SA this year. All looking good in the NT.

**Kim Cowan**

*President - Masters Australian Football Northern Territory Inc*





## ***Queensland President's Annual Report 2021***

Season 2021 was again disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, although not as severely as season 2020. We were able to complete the South-East Queensland competitions relatively unscathed, with the loss of only 2 rounds late in the season due to lockdowns. The North Queensland Carnival rounds were played as the pandemic's tentacles did not impact that region as much as our part of the world.

Congratulations must go to all our Club Officials who diligently followed the State Government COVID protocols to ensure that training and match day instructions were adhered to. All we can hope, is that the pandemic starts to show signs of slowing down and that we can all resume a way of life that we certainly enjoyed pre-COVID. Football Clubs play an important role in bringing people together and providing a safe haven. This has been especially important over the past 2 years and I'm sure will continue to do so, in the future.

As a consequence of the Pandemic and the restrictions placed upon everyone by the various forms of Government, the Perth National Carnival that had been held over from the previous year, was again impacted. Whilst the Carnival went ahead, QLD, NSW, ACT, Vic Metro and Vic Country were not allowed to travel to WA. We waited for a favourable response from the WA Government but it did not eventuate. Carnival Merchandise was purchased and will be distributed at the AGM in late January for the respective Club Delegates to pickup and distribute. Full refunds were given to all registered people and the Committee made the decision to absorb the SportsTG fee on each order.

Looking forward the Committee are planning a big 2022 with a full 12-round fixture in South-East Queensland which will see the Brisbane and Sunshine Coast fixtures and the Gold Coast fixtures played on the same weekends. This will allow for an increase in the successful Over 53 matches that will be played on the off- weekends, which will allow greater participation than previous attempts. There are also opportunities opening up to include women into AFL Masters Queensland this season and hopefully the work we have been putting in behind the scenes, will allow this to occur.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the work done by our Committee over the past year. These positions take up a considerable amount of time to execute professionally and I would like to acknowledge Sam French for taking the lead on our transition to Play HQ which has replaced SportsTG as the platform for all things Footy. Sam has it positioned to open up for registrations come February 1. I would also like to acknowledge Paul Brown for his contribution this season and wish him well in his new venture.

Lastly, I look forward to continuing in this role and if all goes to plan, AFL Masters Queensland will enjoy an exciting couple of years ahead.

**Steve Burchill**

*President – AFL Masters Queensland Inc*



## *South Australian President's Annual Report 2021*

2021, the association's 40-year Anniversary, certainly a fantastic milestone given these uncertain times.

The season kicked off with a standalone first round being played at East Hectorville grounds. The four founding Teams, East, West, South & North (Pooraka) played in a double header which was preceded by an over 50's game. It was a fitting tribute to open the season and was well supported by a very good, vocal crowd in attendance.

Great to see a number of past players & Life members at the games to witness this memorable occasion.



The following week the balance of the first round got underway with all teams eager to enjoy the positive start to the new season. The new addition to our clubs, Ingle Farm were welcomed into the AFL Masters family and were excited to be part of the action. Also, we welcomed back the Riverland Superdogs who had stood down from the 2020 season due to the COVID situation, which affected their local football association choosing to cancel their local league.

Thankfully the COVID-19 problems from the previous season stayed away & we only suffered a minor setback when the state went into a 5-day lockdown. Credit to all clubs as our round was adjusted accordingly.

Being our Association 40 Year Anniversary, a celebratory Gala Night was planned for mid-season. The Executive committee worked tirelessly with a major amount of planning into making this a memorable night, that unfortunately the lockdown hit the week that had been set for our event. Having to postpone, fortunately the Entertainment Centre were exceptional in assisting us to transfer our set date to later in the season, which worked out perfectly. A record number of some 315 plus players, supporters, past members enjoyed a night to remember. Great food, drinks, music and importantly a coming together of all clubs to celebrate this important milestone. I would like to thank all clubs for the support given to this occasion.



Games throughout the season were well supported and in the main were played in the true spirit of AFL Masters rules, “Footy for Fun”. Umpiring was performed admirably with the odd moments being handled well. As per normal the rounds were adjusted from time to time given availability of some grounds, to the participating clubs affected it was handled efficiently and games went ahead without too much inconvenience.

The annual pilgrimage to Broken Hill went ahead mid-season with a collection of players from our various clubs. Victory for our players over Broken Hill was celebrated well, as normally Broken Hill are very strong fielding their local side.

Aside from our normal season there were a couple of over 50 games played plus a mini carnival towards the end of the season. This was to give the players going to Perth for the National Carnival, an opportunity to play with teammates in their respective age groups. Our AFL Masters Women also had a couple of mini games linked to these games for them to also bond together for the National carnival.

Congratulations go to the Women also, as they worked tirelessly to get numbers required for the Perth carnival and actually had a side [22] players organised by June/July. Well done.

This year’s National Carnival was held in Perth, the first time since 2003. Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 ongoing developments, the states attending were down, with the NT, Tasmania, South Australia & West Australia in attendance. Although numbers were down, SA had our best representation for a number of years, fielding 4 men’s plus a women’s team, almost 100 players plus partners, children etc.

For the first time for many years SA fielded a 35-45 side which had a collection of newer players that played in their first carnival. They were successfully coached by Mark Good & played off for the Championship against a very strong WA side, going down by a small margin at the final siren. All other SA sides, including our Women's side performed well, with all players giving their all for the State.

All played well and congratulations go to the players that were named as All Australians. In total we had 15 men and 5 women selected, a great effort against some stiff opposition from the other states.

Our association had strong numbers for the season, 610 players registered, which was an excellent result with several new, younger players joining AFL Masters for the first time. This season also saw an increased number of families, partners & children supporting their clubs, well done to all involved.

There have been three new clubs enquire about entering their clubs into the competition for 2022. Of these, all have proceeded to tender applications within the guidelines set down in our constitution and they will present to Club delegates at our AGM, for all to vote on for possible acceptance into the AFL Masters SA competition.



The association, AFL Masters SA has secured the 2022 National Carnival, which is destined to be the largest carnival in the AFL Masters history. It will possibly have up to 60 teams from around the country compete, which is magnificent. As the Eastern states have not been able to participate in a carnival for 3 years due to COVID, they are super keen to be at the Adelaide carnival. Further updates will be released as they come to hand and we move forward.

While the 2021 season has wrapped up, we look forward to the 2022 season with renewed confidence, onwards & upwards.

Special thank you to my fellow committee members for their continuous support and tireless efforts to ensure that 2021 was a memorable season. Also, to all club delegates on an incredibly challenging but rewarding season, where everyone has played their part in maintaining a professional standard to keep our game in great shape. Thank you all for your continued support.

**Brenton Wortley**

*President – Masters Australian Football-SA Division Inc*





## *Tasmanian President's Annual Report 2021*

Tasmanian Masters were please after a COVID stricken 2020 that we could join SA, NT & WA in Perth for the 2021 National Masters Football Carnival. Although we were disappointed that the other States could not attend.

The coaches worked very hard through the year to get players away. Although struggling for numbers in most sides Tasmania were great full to WA, SA & ACT for supplying us players during the Carnival.



We announced all coaches at our State Dinner on November 13th 2021 which was held at the Launceston Country Club Casino and recruiting is well under way for 2022 in Adelaide.

Our Domestic Competition went through the 2021 season without any COVID-19 interruption which was pleasing to all concerned. Hoping this will happen again in 2022.

Tasmanian Masters would like to thank the Perth Organising Committee for putting the 2021 Carnival together. There were a couple of minor hiccups but you expect that at any Carnival.

We had two milestones reached while we were in Perth 2021.

Firstly, Peter (Doc) Clements was inducted into the National Hall of Fame. Peter has put together over 26 years into Masters football and this award was fitting to a person that gives his all to Masters.



Secondly, Don Dykes played his 100 National Carnival game while in Perth. A great achievement considering Don started playing his first Masters Football in Hobart 1993.



On finishing Tasmanian Masters wish Neil and Mary King all the best in the future and I would like to thank them both for their help over the years I have been involved.

See you all in Adelaide 2022.

**Curtis Ward**

*President - AFL Masters Tasmania (Inc)*