



Walking Football Federation Australia

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Purpose and objectives of the Walking Football Federation Australia (WFFA)

Walking Football is a modified version of football (soccer) specifically designed for older adults who may have mobility issues or health concerns that prevent them from playing the regular game.

Since its inception in 2010,^[1] Walking Football has gained popularity worldwide and is one of the fastest growing sports for older people globally. It provides a low-impact, enjoyable form of exercise that promotes physical activity, social interaction, and mental well-being for older people.

Walking Football hubs began to appear in Australia in 2017. In 2019, Sport Australia in partnership with Active Ageing Australia provided funding to the then Football Federation Australia (FFA) and the state footballing bodies to promote and develop the sport. This funding helped increase the number of hubs across Australia, particularly in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. However, once the funding ended, the state bodies (with the exception of Queensland), largely stopped promoting and developing the sport.

This lack of support from most of football's governing bodies has led to the establishment of disparate clubs and organisations across Australia which have coordinated Walking Football at a local and state level.

In 2022, the then Walking Football representatives from all states came together to discuss how best to develop our sport, in all the circumstances. All representatives were 'unanimous in expressing the view that Walking Football would be best served by its own governing body in Australia and each member of the panel gave an assurance to work together to address this need'.

[1] John Croot and his colleagues at Chesterfield FC Community Trust (in the UK) are recognised as the creators of Walking Football – which commenced in 2010 in the UK.

As a result, the Walking Football Federation Australia (WFFA) was established to become the national sporting organisation (NSO) for Walking Football in Australia, to be a united single voice, to act as custodian of the sport, to bring about the unification of Walking Football across Australia, and to maximise the coordination, consistency, promotion, development, growth, sustainability and continuity of the sport, including by:

- (a). creating a governance structure which includes a WFFA Board consisting of representatives from all states and territories;
- (b). working in collaboration with (and developing formal partnerships with) Walking Football clubs across Australia, organisations established in some states and territories which coordinate Walking Football in their state or territory, Football Australia (FA), state and territory football bodies, other relevant domestic bodies and other national and international Walking Football bodies including to:
 - i set the strategic direction of Walking Football in Australia and develop and review policies covering Walking Football;
 - ii provide a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable environment for Walking Football participants which encourages fair play and sportsmanship;
 - iii encourage physical activity, and promote the benefits of Walking Football within the community including its unifying, health and wellbeing, cultural and humanitarian values;
 - iv plan, coordinate, endorse and promote Walking Football sessions, tournaments and other events; and
 - v constantly improve and advocate for the sport of Walking Football in Australia;
- (c). regularly reviewing the progress and effectiveness of Walking Football activities and engaging with participants to gather feedback and implement any improvements;
- (d). ensuring all activities are conducted in accordance with the Walking Football laws of the game (LOTG) and relevant health and safety standards and risk assessments;
- (e). creating and promoting best practice governance that supports budgeting, fundraising, and overseeing the financial aspects of Walking Football activities, ensuring programs are sustainable and affordable;
- (f). organising, coordinating and promoting training for coaches, referees, and volunteers involved in Walking Football activities; and
- (g). promoting Walking Football to new participants, maintaining a welcoming environment and ensuring inclusivity.