



Dianella Junior Soccer Club 2025 AGM – President's Report.

It is hard to believe we are nearing the end of the season, when it feels like only yesterday Round 1 kicked off during the first week in May.

Once again, our playing numbers in 2025 remained at full capacity. In fact, we broke club records as we tried to give as many children as possible the opportunity to play football. We had 363 registered players, playing in 32 teams, representing every age group from under 6s to under 18s. And I am thrilled to say three of those teams, one in the U6s, one in the U7s and now one in the U8s were 'all girls' teams, so we are looking forward to supporting them, along with everyone else in the years to follow. At a time when there are clubs across various winter codes reporting a decline in playing numbers our continued strength is testament to the community spirit present at this club.

2025 like all season's has not been without its challenges as participation in Association Football continues to outstrip all other sports in WA and across Australia. Once again, we reluctantly had to turn players away at the start of the year, but without more space under floodlights and storage facilities we simply cannot get any bigger.

With the many distractions of everyday life around us, your committee has continued to work hard on maintaining the infrastructure and practices necessary, to provide the opportunity for young people to play football in an affordable, community based, family-friendly environment.

We are grateful to the City of Stirling for allowing use of Yokine Regional Open Space as our home ground. This season in particular everyone on their travels has played on plenty of bumpy or grassless muddy paddocks, and it is always a relief coming back to train and play at our home ground. After the seemingly incessant rainfall in June, July and August we agreed with the city to help manage our pitches and cancelled a total of five training sessions across the three months. And for the first time we postponed every match scheduled for Yokine in Round 13 on August 3rd, as the rain continued to fall, and we were hit by high winds, hail and electrical storms. Despite the record rainfall this winter the grounds really are a testament to the work the council put in, so a big thank-you to local Councillors David Lagan and Damian Giudiuci, our Club Development Officers at The City of Stirling and the welcome support of our local MLA Frank Paolino.

We have worked hard with the City of Stirling to establish Yokine Regional Open Space as our home and we were approached by the City at the start of the year, when they asked whether we were open to allowing the Perth Glory Junior Academy squads to train at our home ground. This was discussed at length around the committee table, and the vote was not unanimous, but we agreed to work in conjunction with Perth Glory whilst their new training grounds are completed in Mirrabooka. It is early days, we have not been disadvantaged in any way, and we hope to build upon our relationship with WA's premier football club.

I wish to thank our sponsors Caesar Aquino of Onside Sports and Colin Sanfilippo of Cameleon Coatings. Without their financial support our fees would not remain at the affordable levels they currently are. With our sponsors help we managed to increase our fees in 2025 by the absolute minimum. We have been able to continually invest in the very best equipment available which is an ongoing requirement as balls deflate, goal nets perish, portable goal posts snap, alongside other general wear, and tear across the board. We are indeed very fortunate to have our sponsors on board. Special thanks must go to Onside Sports for our new playing strips this season which are perhaps the smartest yet worn by the players. The purchase of these new shirts was heavily subsidised by Onside Sports, allowing the club to divert funds elsewhere.

Regarding registration fees, with the continuing escalation in running costs we may have to consider raising fees again next year, this is a matter our Treasurer will address shortly. Following last year's increase in the Kidsport funding from \$300 to \$500 we have again seen strong numbers registering via the programme. We have been a supporter of KidSport since inception, so warmly welcome this continuing support from the WA Government which affords every child the opportunity to participate in sport.

We are often asked by members "will we move towards the 'Junior Development League' model or expand to offer senior football?" The answer remains no. We pride ourselves on being a junior community club and part of that commitment is maintaining affordable registration fees for members. The current Development League structure heavily penalises those playing junior football. For example, those clubs pay wages to senior players, qualified Coaches and administrative staff. Imagine the impact this would have on registration fees. A conservative estimate would see an immediate trebling of our basic fees. Approximately 40% of the registration fee is immediately paid away to Football Australia and Football West, but we continue to guarantee that every Dollar we receive from registrations is ploughed back into each player regardless of their age or playing ability. It does not go towards feeding the First Team after training, paying the travelling costs for Coaches or other such expenses. Places permitting, we will continue to offer the right environment for children to play the game they love at an affordable price.

As our Treasurer will shortly report, the Club is in a sound financial position. I am satisfied the future of the Club is financially secure.

Dianella Junior Soccer Club is an organisation that survives solely on the good will of volunteers who give up their time and energy to become committee members, coaches, assistant coaches, managers, referees, assistant referees, and many other tasks allowing children to play football. The success of our club is only possible with the support of these families and volunteers and those that value the role of sport in connecting local communities. To these people I say thank you – this is your Club, and we look forward to your continued contributions in 2026.

I am constantly amazed at the enthusiasm and dedication shown by our Coaches. Many of them return every year and we were joined by several new coaches who, to their credit, took on the responsibility with pride despite some having no prior exposure to coaching. We were worried about trying to find thirty-two coaches for our teams but find them we did, so a massive thank you to every coach for a job well done. I hope they have been “bitten” by the coaching bug, and we see them back next year.

Likewise, our Team Managers. Without your administrative skills many parents would still be trying to find their last venue ahead of kick off time. The work you did in organising the team photos helped us raise a tidy sum, as it looks like a near record number of parents bought the individual pictures of their children. This helps subsidise the provision of the squad photos for every player at the end of the season, a gesture which is widely appreciated by many.

I wish to thank the 2025 committee for their incredible efforts. Every one of you should feel a sense of achievement, knowing that your work goes towards making a fun experience of playing football a reality for so many kids.

Maria Stella continued in the role as Club Secretary and more than supported the club in doing so. Maria has kept us in line at our meetings where she has organised, cajoled, and reminded us, more than most, of the tasks in hand. Maria’s sense of duty even went so far as attending a committee meeting one Tuesday evening following a long journey back from the south-west. I can confirm Maria did not incur any speeding tickets on the return journey and safely made it home after the meeting in one piece. Thank you, Maria, for looking after us during the year.

To my colleagues on the executive, Simon Borck, Treasurer, and Tracy McGuire, Vice President, thank you.

Simon stepped into the Treasurer’s role this season and has not missed a beat as he wrestled with the various processes and systems foisted upon us by Football West and others. He has maintained a tight grip on the purse strings keeping the club’s budget on track, dealing with all the invoices, Football West administration, referees’ fees, suppliers’ costs etc. His prudence and financial acumen have helped the club maintain a healthy bank balance despite the ongoing rise in all operating costs and has put us in a fantastic position for next season. Simon will shortly report on the club’s financial position which should be pleasing to the ear.

Like Simon, Tracy stepped into the Vice President's role this season, and despite wrestling with a new career managed to throw herself into the role with her usual boundless enthusiasm. Tracy managed to maintain the position as Team Manager for the U16s team despite the added responsibilities and has offered continual support to me, the committee and many others at the club that needed help with manager duties or even unravelling the complexities of the rules of junior football and competition management.

To John Griffiths our Equipment Manager, thanks for ensuring each team had the necessary gear before and during the season and for continuing to look after our relationship with Mark My Turf, the team that do such a wonderful job marking our pitches, which during the wettest winter on record was not an easy task. The amount of "toing and froing" John does for the club is beyond compare and I am pleased to report that John is recovering from his latest round of knee reconstruction in his usual laid back manner. He went under the knife on Tuesday and did not hesitate to tell me on Wednesday morning he was already "bored" and itching to be up and about. The fact he was at Yokine on Saturday morning and again on Sunday conducting affairs speaks volumes about his commitment to the club.

Josh Stella continued in the role of Canteen Liaison. His role changed following the decision to close the kitchen after a visit from the City of Stirling's Environmental Health, Food Business Inspection team. But I am pleased to report that Josh managed to again secure the services of Ashleigh and her Koffee2Go van this season, which provided a wonderful service to our members and visitors on Sunday mornings. Thanks, Josh, for making sure there were hot drinks and more available throughout the seemingly endless wet and wintry months.

Christine Barry joined the committee and bravely stepped into the role of Clusters and Mini-roo Coordinator. Ordinarily this is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. But unfortunately, on the eve of season kick off our cluster size was reduced from the usual four to three clubs, which immediately presented issues around playing numbers. We also had the misfortune of dealing with a misogynistic representative at one of the Cluster clubs, who made life very difficult from the start. We did let the President and Junior Co-ordinator of the club know and they did their best to address the issue. We chose to host Clusters at the start of the season, which worked well in the main, but it was a long six weeks of organising and dealing with the one, disagreeable representative. I'm pleased to say Christine handled the situation excellently and managed to keep all further communication at arm's length. Christine's communication with all her teams was excellent and I have received compliments throughout the season. Thank you, Christine, for a job well done.

Robert Barion also joined the committee in the much-needed role of IT and media. Robert has been a knight in shining armour rebuilding our ageing website and discarding a lot of the old systems and unnecessary spend on outdated processes. It is no easy job dragging the club into the 21st Century and I am pleased that Robert is a very patient individual. Thank you, Robert, for the work across the season.

Duncan Mackay, Dean Little, Mel Sack, Tristan Marshall and Rob Kentish remained on the committee serving as valuable members. Everyone contributed fully and alongside fellow committee members, valuable insights were gained, ideas aired, and different perspectives were shared and discussed.

One idea from last year was a definite winner and was hastily scheduled for earlier in the season, our “Coaches and Managers social evening.” Hosted by the Committee and again organised by Mel a healthy number of members enjoyed an evening at Inglewood Bowls Club in June and were treated to a delightful buffet and beverages that kept the chat going for several hours. This initiative has been embraced, and we will continue to build on this in the years to come.

To the committee, those already mentioned, and to those individuals not on the committee who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes, thank you again for making this Club a true, community asset. Your contributions are vital.

We are a fortunate club as we have had many strong and active members since formation. Your committee this year honoured Josh Stella with the award of Club Person of The Year. I got to know Josh well as he became my assistant coach in the U10s and remained so through to the U18s, but he wasn't finished there. As soon as his eldest nephew played his last game of football for Dianella, Josh switched attention to his younger nephew and volunteered to assist with the training of that team in the U14s. As well as assisting coaches, Josh has also refereed numerous matches across most age groups when called upon. He joined the committee a few years ago where he first looked after the Canteen portfolio. Even before joining the committee, he was there to help and is always buzzing around the club and without fail volunteers his time with a smile on his face. Josh's award is long overdue for someone who cannot do enough for the club.

This year, the Committee agreed overwhelmingly to recognise the support and work that Akash Bisnath has given to the club over 15 years, awarding him with Life Membership. Akash joined the committee not long after registering his eldest son and he became Club Treasurer in 2015, a position he held for 10 years. And believe me, he ruled the clubs' finances with an iron fist. He always put the club first and dedicated his time in making sure that every registered player had the best equipment and facilities we could offer. At one time all three of Akash's children played for the club, but now his youngest son has finished his last season in the 18s, no doubt like Club Person of The Year Josh, his attention will turn to his nephews who are still playing at Dianella. Akash, the club and I have leant on you many times over the years, and this is the least we could do to thank you for your efforts.

We formally recognised one more individual this season, and pleasingly it is a former player who to this day continues to help the club in any way she can. Tahlia Griffiths joined the club as a player in 2015 and was the only girl in the team through to 2022 when she reluctantly hung her boots up to concentrate on studying. But since then, she has been involved in the background every season, organising strips, helping the KOFFEE2GO Van on most Sunday's, and even sorting hundreds of drinks and pizzas for the teams at wind-ups. But more importantly, for the last 7 years, when hosting the U6s and 7s Clusters, Tahlia has been the first to arrive at Yokine to organise up to 10 Cluster pitches. We have calculated in that time she has set up over 400 pop up goals. There is no one in the club faster in putting those goals in place. If only the Guinness World Record's recognised that discipline.

In perhaps a sign of things to come in a warming world, and hot on the heels of a similar issue in 2024 preparations for the 2025 Season were impacted very early by extreme weather, when our follow up Minroo Assessment session for the U9s to U12s on March 13th was postponed due to violent storm activity across the southwest of WA. In line with our own Storm and Lightning Policy and Football West's Extreme Weather Policy, the committee agreed we had no choice but to postpone. Fortunately, we were able to re-schedule for the following week as our coaches rallied behind the club allowing us to see the assessments through.

We take great pride in the fact we are now establishing an 'all-girls teams' presence at the club. Another aspect of the game we have always championed is inclusivity. From advocating KidSport and keeping fees reasonable, to being one of the founding clubs of the United Reds League in 2021 and then the i-League (where our squad this year had a record 18 players registered), we try when we can to make the game more inclusive. Mick Owens, our former Vice President is now the Inclusions Manager for the Football Futures Foundation, and he still coaches the i-League squad for Dianella. He enquired would Dianella be interested in hosting a one-off Para Matildas afternoon, which would be run with the Paras Matildas coaching staff who were flying into WA from New South Wales. We jumped at the chance, gained City of Stirling approval for Saturday afternoon access in June and were thrilled that the event for all registered i-League and Para players was a great success. Apparently, the Para Matildas coaching staff were most impressed with our pitches which is a constant message from all visiting teams.

At that event the WA ID (Intellectual disability) squad took part and played a match versus i-League players. You can imagine the excitement when we learned that the same WA ID Team had been invited to take part in the Genuine World Cup at the end of July. The Genuine World Cup is an international football tournament celebrating inclusion and excellence and was being played in Houston, Texas. The event is huge and for the first time an Australian team had been invited to play and would compete against the likes of FC Barcelona, Valencia FC, Werder Bremen, Inter Miami, Manchester City, Glasgow Rangers as well as national teams from Argentina, Mexico, India, and beyond. The WA ID squad performed admirably and finished the tournament in a more than credible seventh place.

Other highlights of the season included our U18s Team 1 hosting a training BBQ for the entire club. This was very strongly supported on a cold July evening, with the proceeds being shared between the club, and the U18s Team 1 end of season celebrations.

We also got involved with a couple of School Holiday Clinics at Yokine, which were hosted by Pro Football Training, the wildly successful coaching team that we use to run our initial U9s to U12s assessment before the season starts. The April and July clinics were very popular, and we will do what we can to build on relationships with organisations that are keen to bring fun and enjoyment back to the game of football.

The 2025 Season was the third since Football West introduced Squadi, their chosen game day and team management platform. Improvements have been made since 2023, leading to a smoother experience for most coaches, managers, and club administrators. There are however still issues around Squadi access on an admin front for coaches and managers which I hope will be sorted by 2026.

Frustratingly though, the introduction by Football Australia of a new version of Play Football, their registration platform was an unmitigated disaster that reflected very badly on football. Anything that could go wrong did go wrong. The front-end screens were not set up correctly leading to registrations being missed or lost. From parents trying to register their children being locked out, and then not being able to pay when registering. From administrators also being locked out and then not being able to create teams once players were registered, the list goes on. It all added up to a lot of increased stress, workload and time spent on basic administrative duties. Every club had the same issues. I feel sure that Football Australia are aware of the problems encountered, we and other clubs have certainly let them know and I sincerely hope they address the system before Season 2026 registrations open.

On the field, as in all sports there were success stories and the not so successful. Whatever the story, our aim was to make the experience for every player an enjoyable one. Worthy of note however, once again, were the achievements of our Juniors.

Following Round 18, incredibly five of our seven Junior teams finished in the Top 4. Our U18s Team 1 playing in Division 1 unfortunately missed out on the Top 4 Finals by just two points. They were hit hard by injuries including losing their keeper in the first couple of rounds, but they had an excellent season, and the squad acquitted themselves very well. Our U18s Team 2 excelled, consisting mainly of players moving up from the U16s and confounded all expectations to finish the season in third place in Div 5.

Our U16 squad had a great year which included being moved up into Division Two by Football West and playing four catch up games during the last 8 Rounds. They finished the season in third place and go into the finals in excellent form, but possibly without their goalkeeper who injured himself ahead of Round 17.

The U15s team, playing in North Division 2 also excelled and were in the top four for most of the season. In finishing the season in second place we will be hosting their Semi-final They had success against the other top three teams so go into next week's match full of hope.

The U14s team followed their older counterparts and flirted with the Top 4 all season, finally finishing in fourth place in North Division 2. They also finished the season strongly and go into their Semi-final full of self-belief.

Lastly, our two U13s squad had excellent seasons as they progressed onto full size pitches. Team One were promoted by Football West to North Division 1 joining some very strong teams and managed to secure fourth place. In their Semi-final they are playing a strong Mindarie side who only lost one game, and they also drew one, against our Dianella side, so our squad knows they have the measure of them. U13s Team 2 also played some great football in North Division 4 and improved significantly as the season went on. At one stage it looked like they could threaten the top four, but their last few games were played against top teams and they just missed out, finishing in sixth place.

We wish our Junior teams competing in their Top 4 Semi-final matches this Sunday all the best and win or lose they should enjoy the experience.

Pleasingly our i-League participation has gone from strength to strength this year, with numbers growing as they continue to be guided and coached by Mick. He has thrown all manner of challenges at his squad, and the clusters format continues to work well for all the clubs involved.

In the absence of recorded scores for Miniroos (U8s to U12s) it is difficult to highlight achievements, but in our 10s, 11s and 12s we had teams competing at a high Metro level and each squad performed admirably against the so called "bigger clubs." Indeed, our u12s Team 1 squad played in the Metro Green level, the very highest, and more than held their own. Some of our Miniroo squads with players starting their journey in football had a tougher season, as they came up against some teams perhaps playing the wrong level of football. But they continued to train with a smile on their faces and never once shirked the challenges faced on match day. They all improved due to the diligence of their Coaches and support from the touchline.

However, our club has always maintained that children's sport is about so much more than winning. So, thank you to every squad for playing the Dianella way this season. Regardless of playing ability, from the fiercely competitive Metro Leagues to the more 'social' levels we are very proud of our players. Well done to all those involved.

I would like to recognise the following players who played their sixth season at Dianella, thus playing 100 games. Leo Arcus, Reuben Chok, Joseph Vernon, Alex Calnan, Sebastian Di Dio, Jack Little and Cameron Irwin.

In addition, we had four players playing their 200th games this season, meaning they have played 11 years at Dianella Junior Soccer Club. Our congratulations go to Cameron McGrath, Nathan Bell, Alex Mackay and Cooper Westhead.

This is a truly incredible achievement, in this era of so called “development” squads and false promises on offer at other clubs. A big thank you also goes to the parents and caregivers who have supported their children through the inevitable highs and lows of six and eleven + years of junior football.

The fun and inclusive environment we strive to attain was much in evidence at yesterday’s end of season wind-up. Despite the wild weather, the rain mostly stayed away which always helps, and the hard work put in by many of the committee members over the weekend was rewarded as the reserve was full of excited players and their supporters. Medals and awards were given out, trophies handed across and teams came together to celebrate the season in style. The Pizza’s from Domino’s were a success again, and the trophies appeared to be extremely popular. Just a quick aside, my family went to dinner at The Inglewood Hotel last night and there were two U9s Dianella families sharing a table in the restaurant, and in the middle of the table, taking pride of place were the players participation trophies. We should never forget how much the trophies mean to the kids.

A thank you goes to our special guests in attendance yesterday, our local MLA Frank Paolino, local Councillors David Lagan and Damian Giudiuci and also Adam Bugarija and Will Frenay, two of the Perth Glory Men’s A League squad. Thanks for spending the time with our players and supporters. Thanks also go to Prime Trophies, Midland Photography, Domino’s Pizza Inglewood, and Matrix Audio for playing their part in delivering for the players. And thanks again to all the committee members who helped before, during and after the event. In wild weather things could not have gone any better.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage others to become part of the Dianella Junior Soccer Club story, by getting involved at Committee level or at grass roots where the teams are. We are always on the lookout for new ideas and areas of expertise. Without a committee the Club cannot exist, and many on the current committee will not be at the club for much longer as their children grow out of junior sport. New blood is desperately needed to ensure the continuity of our work. Dianella Junior Soccer Club is a friendly, welcoming place that offers a rewarding experience. Please give it some thought, we would love to hear from you ahead of our first meeting in the new year.

We have spoken about funding before and believe that the chronically low level of funding for football at a Federal and State level still needs to be addressed. For way too long Association Football has been the poor relation to AFL, where levels of funding dwarf every other sport played in the country. Particularly for female football, no longer should players tolerate the lack of dressing room facilities or bathrooms. There is no doubt the lack of floodlighting and storage facilities is holding us back as a club. Those kids we turn away every year may not get an opportunity at another club. But with increased floodlighting and greater storage facilities we could create more squads, giving even more kids the chance to play sport. If more children have facilities available to play sport the benefits for society are obvious. With junior sport comes a sense of belonging, with junior sport comes fitness, fitness leads to healthiness, healthiness leads to less pressure on social and medical resources, and so the cycle continues.

And we will do what we can to play our part. With the help of the committee and members, Dianella Junior Soccer Club will continue to serve the community for many years to come.

Thank you.