



Dianella Junior Soccer Club 2026 AGM – President's Report.

Well, here we are at the end of Season 2026. A season I believe we can look back on with a certain amount of pride and with a strong belief there is plenty to build on in the coming years.

The Season kicked off on Sunday 26th April and once again the club was looking at a record number of players and teams. Our playing numbers remained at full capacity as we tried to give as many children as possible the opportunity to play football. We had 391 registered players, playing in 33 teams, representing every age group from under 6s to under 18s. And it is pleasing to report three of those teams, in the U7s, the U8s and now one in the U10s 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.

2026 like every season has not been without its challenges as participation in Association Football continues to outpace all other sports in WA and across Australia. Once again, we reluctantly had to turn away over 60 disappointed players at the start of the year, and this number appears to grow annually. Quite simply without more training space covered by floodlighting and increased storage facilities we simply cannot get any bigger. We are now at the absolute limit of players we can safely accommodate.

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 granting us use of Yokine Regional Open Space as our home ground. As always, it is a relief to our teams after they have played elsewhere on a Sunday, to return to Yokine to train and play at our home ground. Unlike recent years, this winter was incredibly dry, and we were not forced into cancelling any training sessions or postponing any matches. Despite the lack of rain, the grounds really are a testament to the work the council put in, so a big thank-you to local Councillors Damien Giudici and Daniela Ion, 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 in late 2025 we entered into discussion with the other Yokine ROS club users, namely Rangers Hockey and Stirling Cricket club, as the City of Stirling advised that following numerous, ongoing issues at their current home, Inglewood Little Athletics would be moving to Yokine ROS for the beginning of the 2026 summer season. This was discussed at length between all involved groups, and several problems were immediately identified, uppermost amongst them the non-compatibility of the two proposed summer users, cricket and athletics. Stirling Cricket Club have subsequently been relocated.

Athletics appeared to have a long list of must-haves, and this helped create the feeling that if this could be made to work for them, then perhaps DJSC and hockey could also benefit from their relocation.

The athletics proposals were presented by the council, and we immediately pushed back with several concerns, which were largely ignored. Proposed build times then appeared, and again we pushed back as when they first emerged, they would have severely impacted our ability to host matches on a Sunday for every team at the club.

What did not help matters was the initial positioning by the City of Stirling of the Junior goals in mid-March, which this year was chaotic. As always, we had agreed pitch locations with the council and then arranged with our line-marking team from Marky My Turf, to clearly mark the goal post positions ahead of council instalment. Imagine our surprise once installed, to be advised by Mark My Turf when they returned to mark the pitches, one set of goal posts had been placed 35 meters further south than agreed, and the remaining two sets were 8 meters out of position. Putting things simply, this impacted the positions of all 9 of our pitches and would have severely compromised hockey's pitches, which would have been pushed 35 meters south and been in the cricket nets or on the footpath.

A meeting was immediately arranged with the council, and they agreed the goal posts would be moved to the correct locations. They were relocated but to a position 5 meters north of the original agreed location. This had serious implications as this put our pitches immediately adjacent to the proposed athletic long jump pits, and the proposed javelin run up and discus throwing circle.

A compromise and new build timetable were agreed upon (which allowed us to operate with only two of the three junior pitches at any one time), and then we watched and wondered as building commenced in the middle of June.

To cut a long story short (honestly this is the short version), the agreed building schedule was not followed, and we were forced to call another emergency meeting to ensure we could keep two junior pitches accessible for match play on Sunday morning. An additional meeting was also arranged as the shot-put throwing circles were still in the wrong location, but despite this the concrete pour went-ahead as scheduled and we wait with interest to see how this effects our pitch locations for Season 2027.

A request has been made for an early resolution to pitch locations for next season, which we feel will require a complete re-draw of our pitch layout. The council have said a meeting will take place soon and we will keep members informed, as pitch availability will determine the number of players we can register and teams we can nominate with Football West for next season.

I wish to thank our sponsor Caesar Aquino of Onside Sports. Without their financial support our fees would not remain at the affordable levels they currently are. With the help of Onside Sports, our 2026 registration fees were held at the 2025 level, which in this world of ever-increasing costs was no mean feat. 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 sponsor on board and thank Caesar again for his ongoing support of all things Dianella Soccer.

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, JDL 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. Our fees do not go towards feeding the First Team after training, paying the travelling costs for Coaches or other spurious 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. A special mention must go to the volunteers who refereed matches from the U6s to U18s, and to the individuals that ran the lines in Junior football every Sunday. To everyone I say thank you – this is your Club, and we look forward to your continued contributions in 2027.

I am constantly amazed at the enthusiasm and dedication shown by our Coaches. Many of them return each 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-three 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. Special mention at this point to U18s player Xander, who was keen to get involved in coaching once we identified that 12s Team 3 did not have a parent volunteer as the season started. Scott, one of the parent’s acted as a shadow coach for Xander on Matchday, and the squad improved out of sight as the season progressed, so well done to Xander, Scott and the team.

To 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 was much appreciated as we trialled a new supplier, following Midland Photography’s disappearance from the sporting scene. Thank you, Managers, for your organisational skills this season.

I wish to thank the 2026 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 so many ways. Maria has kept us in line at our meetings where she has organised, cajoled, and reminded us, me more than most, of the tasks in hand. And more importantly Maria helped Mel in organising our early season welcome evening for Coaches and Managers. 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.

This was Simon's second season in the role, and he has again not missed a beat wrestling with the various processes and systems foisted upon us by Football West and others. A tight grip has been kept 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.

This season was also Tracy's second in the Vice President's role, and despite wrestling with a couple of career changes managed to throw herself into the role with her usual boundless enthusiasm. Tracy managed to maintain the position as Team Manager for U18s team 1 despite the added responsibilities and has offered support to me, the committee and many others at the club that needed help with manager duties, including 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. The amount of "toing and froing" John does for the club is beyond compare and there are not many parts of the club that have not been improved or had better outcomes after John got involved.

Josh Stella continued in the role of Canteen Liaison. This role changed a few years ago following the closure of 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 colder wintry months.

Christine Barry continued in her role of Clusters and Mini-roo Coordinator. Fortunately, the role was a lot smoother than in 2025 as the dynamic of our fellow Cluster clubs this season was far more welcoming and inclusive. We again requested to host Clusters at the start of the season which worked well in the main and helped set the benchmark for efficiency with fun. I have received several messages of thanks for Christine's work across the Mini-roos so thank you for a job well done.

Robert Barion remained in the much-needed role of IT and media. Robert has been a knight in shining armour rebuilding our ageing website, discarding a lot of the old systems and maintaining our online presence with a steady hand. It is no easy job dragging the club into the 21st Century, but Robert made a start last year and has continued to chip away at a thankless task.

Mel Sack has grown into her time on the committee, again taking the lead in organising the Coaches and Managers welcome evening earlier in the season, and led the search of finding a replacement photography team following Midland Photography's take-over and disappearance from sports photography. Aussies in Action were selected, and the results have been well received from parents and Team Managers alike. We will look to build on the relationship with Aussies in Action, who are based here in Perth.

Dean Little and Glenn Grant remained on the committee serving as valuable members and their insights into the life and times of Junior football across different age groups are invaluable in steering the committee. Everyone contributed fully and alongside their fellow committee members, valuable insights were gained, ideas aired, and different perspectives were shared and discussed.

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 awarded the Club Person of the Year to a family, so our Club Family of the Year were Christine, Paul and their two children who play at DJSC.

Paul has been coaching at Dianella for over 8 years and in that time has helped in the running of the Club in every way possible, including stepping in to Coach additional squads that were without a coach at the start of the season. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of many coaching initiatives, and we look forward to his continued support in bringing all comers to the game.

Christine, the long-suffering football widow of Paul joined the committee several years ago and immediately threw herself into looking after the Miniroos and Clusters. This was a baptism of fire, dealing with some rude and obnoxious club administrators from other clubs. But Christine battled on, dealing very diplomatically with the fools down the road, and has added so much to the running of the Clusters in the last two years she now has a job for life.

Their eldest son playing in the U13s helped his brother's team by refereeing U9s matches this year when the fixtures allowed, and their son in the U9s, well he quite simply deserved his award for continuing the long line of Barry's involved in football and tolerating parents that live and dedicate so much of their time to their local community football club.

This year, in-deliberating Life Membership, the Committee agreed overwhelmingly to recognise the support and work that John and Maria have given to the club over many years. John's son Mitchell joined the club back in 2012, and Maria's eldest son Christian joined in 2014. They both joined the committee in 2014 and soon got involved in everything that junior sports administration throws at you.

John immediately took over the Grounds and Equipment Manager role in 2014, a position which he has held ever since, and has made the role his own. Mitchell left in 2018, and John's daughter Tahlia played through to the U14s before leaving the club in 2022. John soldiered on, looking after every moving part of the club with gusto. However, sadly this season is John's last as he looks forward to retiring, meaning plenty of camping and fishing expeditions that won't give him the time to spend at Yokine. We will greatly miss John, son Mitchell for his heavy lifting, and daughter Tahlia and wife Laurie who have both always stepped up to help the club when needed. Tahlia's help, especially when hosting Clusters was immense.

Maria was a very active committee member for years, first taking the role as Clusters and Miniroos Coordinator as both her boys played their way through the age groups, and this was a role Maria continued in despite her youngest moving into junior football. Maria stepped into the role as Club Secretary in 2022, a position she took on with pride. As secretary, Maria has organised club parades at Optus Stadium, registered us for the FW Hyundai Raffle ensuring the club can benefit from a handy source of funds, kept the committee in check at meetings and various functions, dealt with endless Football West communications, maintained dialogue with our councillors and MPs, and importantly been an ever-present smiling and friendly face at Yokine and beyond. We are unsure whether Maria's son Seb will play on into the 18s next year, so this may be Maria's last season at the club.

Thank you again to both John and Maria for their tireless contributions to the running of the club.

To touch on a few of the season highlights I will start with a thank you to one of our parents, Grant Heard, who ran a series of goalkeeping sessions on Tuesday evenings that were attended by keepers from the 10s, 11s, 12s and 14s. Their performances in goal certainly lifted as the season went on.

We also got involved with School Holiday Clinics at Yokine, hosted by Pro Football Training, the wildly successful coaching team that we use to oversee our initial U9s to 12s assessments before the season starts. The clinics are extremely popular and there is another due to be held during the current school holidays. We cemented our relationship with PFT still further by asking them to run a Coaching course for our Coaches. This was very well attended and will be followed up by other courses next season.

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, were the achievements of our Juniors.

U18s Team 1 playing in Division 2 were sitting in fourth place going into Round 18 and despite winning their last game against the side at the top of the table, missed out on the Top 4 as they were overtaken by a team that only played 13 matches in the division, as FW ruled the division would be settled on a Points Per Game basis. This appears to be grossly unfair and in our end of season review to FW we will make a recommendation to FW that such decisions need to be communicated much earlier than the week before Round 18.

Following Round 18, incredibly our seven remaining Junior teams finished in the Top 4, and three of them, U14s Team 2, the U15s and the U16s won their Top 4 semi-finals, all via the dreaded penalty shoot outs. Every team played their hearts out in the semi-finals and U13s Teams 1 and 2, U14 Team 1 and U18s Team 2 played teams that finished above them in the league and gave them their hardest game of the season, before eventually bowing out of the competition.

Our three Top 4 finalists played on Sunday at UWA Sports Park. U14s Team 2 drew their final with Kingsley Westside 2-2, but this time lost the penalty shoot-out. The U15s also lost their final against a very strong Subiaco squad who won the match 3-0. Our U16s took their supporters through every possible emotion drawing their game 1-1 against a “spirited” Westnam team, but the 16s again held their nerve in the penalty shootout winning 3-1.

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 Minirooms (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.” Some of our Miniroom 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 smiles on their faces and never once shirked the challenges faced on match day. They all improved due to the enthusiasm and energy of their Coaches, and of course the support from the touchline.

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’ divisions we are very proud of our players.

I would like to recognise the following players who played their sixth season at Dianella, thus playing 100 games. Brothers Archie and Luca, Harry, Owen, Oliver, Mark, Massimo, Cameron and Daniel.

In addition, we had five players celebrating 11 seasons at Dianella Junior Soccer Club, playing their 200th games. Our congratulations go to Sebastian, Damon, Mason, Archie and Andrew.

In the era of so called “development” squads and the false promises on offer elsewhere this is an incredible achievement. A big thank you to the parents and caregivers who 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 achieve was much in evidence at last weeks end of season wind-up. The rain stayed away as the sun shone, and the hard work put in by many 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.

Thank you to our special guests in attendance, especially local Councillors Damien Giudici and Daniela Ion. Thanks also go to Prime Trophies, Aussies in Action, 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. The afternoon 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 committee meeting in the new year.

We have spoken about funding before and I make no apologies about mentioning it again as I believe that the 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. As previously mentioned, there is no doubt the lack of floodlighting and storage facilities are holding us back as a club. Those children we turn away every year may not get an opportunity at another club and be lost to sport for ever. But with better infrastructure we could create more squads, giving even more kids the chance to play sport. If more children can 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 and happiness, and all of these lead 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 years to come.

Thank you.