

# NATIONAL COACHING ACCREDITATION POLICY



November 2018



## PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this National Coaching Accreditation Policy (**Policy**) is to provide a fair and consistent national framework for Accreditation of Coaches of Australian rules football at all levels other than the elite football.
- B. In this Policy, “elite football” is used to describe, in relation to men’s football, the Australian rules football competition known as the AFL and, in relation to women’s football, the Australian rules football competition known as AFLW. All levels of Australian rules football other than elite football encompass all Australian rules football competitions that, in respect of men’s football and women’s football, sit below AFL and AFLW respectively, and includes all State Leagues.
- C. Implementing a national framework for Accreditation of Coaches focused on improving Coach education and Player safety at all levels of Australian football forms part of the AFL’s commitment to creating a fun and safe environment for all Members to participate in Australian football (as more broadly set out in the Member Protection Policy).
- D. Except for paragraph 3.2, this Policy does not apply to Appointment of Coaches. For clarity, Appointment of Coaches must be handled by the relevant Club, League or other Football Body proposing to retain the relevant Coach in accordance with the relevant policies and guidelines relating to such Appointments, including the National Child Protection Policy.

## 1. Application

### 1.1 Scope

This Policy applies to all Coaches in Australian football Leagues at all levels (other than the elite level AFL Competitions) that are conducted or administered by:

- (a) a State or Territory League or body that is affiliated with the AFL, including:
  - (i) NSW/ACT: AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Ltd ACN 086 839 385;
  - (ii) NT: AFL Northern Territory Ltd ACN 097 620 525;
  - (iii) QLD: AFL Queensland ACN 090 629 342;
  - (iv) SA: South Australian National Football League Inc ABN 59 518 757 737;
  - (v) TAS: Football Tasmania Limited ACN 085 213 350;
  - (vi) Victoria: Australian Football League (Victoria) Ltd ACN 147 664 579;
  - (vii) WA: West Australian Football Commission Inc ABN 51 167 923 136; or
- (b) an entity or body that is affiliated with (or licensed by) a State or Territory body listed in paragraph 1.1(a),  
  
(each a **Football Body**).

### 1.2 Operation

All Coaches, Clubs, Leagues and Football Bodies must comply with this Policy.

## 2. Definitions and interpretation

### 2.1 Definitions

**Accreditation** of a Coach means registration and accreditation of that Person on Coach.AFL in accordance with this Policy, and the word Accredited has a cognate meaning.

**Applicant** has the meaning given to that term in paragraph 6.

**Appointment** of a Coach means appointment by a Club, League or other Football Body of a Person to be a Coach of that Club, League or other Football Body (as applicable), and the word Appointed has a cognate meaning.

**Club** means an Australian football club fielding a team within a Competition conducted by a Football Body.

**Coach** includes:

- (a) a senior coach, reserves coach, assistant coach, volunteer coach or any other Person with, or seeking to hold, coaching responsibilities at a Club who is required to be Accredited in accordance with this Policy; and
- (b) where the context requires, a Person applying for Accreditation under this Policy or appealing a refusal or revocation of Accreditation under this Policy.

**Coach.AFL** means the AFL's online website of that name, the associated Coaching Accreditation and registration portal, and the library of online training and other materials made available to all Accredited Coaches.

**Commission** means the Commission appointed pursuant to the Articles of Association of the AFL.

**Competition** means an Australian football competition (including 'AFL 9s' and 'masters' competitions) conducted or administered by a Football Body, League or Football Body affiliate.

**Foundation Accreditation** means the basic level of accreditation for all Coaches who have completed the required education programs to obtain that level of Accreditation as determined by the AFL from time to time.

**General Counsel** means the person appointed to that position by the Commission (or their nominee).

**Head of Game Development** means the person so designated by the General Counsel and includes any Person or Persons to whom the Head of Game Development may delegate their function(s) under this Policy.

**League** means an Australian football league or a Football Body which conducts or administers a Competition.

**Level 2 Accreditation** means the intermediate level of accreditation for certain Coaches who have completed the required educational programs to obtain that level of Accreditation as determined by the AFL from time to time.

**Level 3 Accreditation** means the advanced level of accreditation for certain Coaches who have completed the required educational programs to obtain that level of Accreditation as determined by the AFL from time to time.

**National Child Protection Policy** means the AFL's national policy of that name (as updated from time to time).

**National Police Check** means a national police check conducted by the Australian Federal Police (<https://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/services/criminal-records/national-police-checks>) or an equivalent State or Territory based national police check.

## **2.2 Interpretation**

- (a) Headings and indexes are only included for ease of reference only.
- (b) Unless the context requires otherwise, all capitalised terms in this Policy have the meaning given to them in the Member Protection Policy.

## **3. Accreditation required for Appointment**

### **3.1 Accreditation generally**

- (a) The AFL has implemented an online portal known as Coach.AFL through which:
  - (i) Accreditation of all Coaches of Australian football is administered; and
  - (ii) Accredited Coaches have access to an extensive library of educational and other materials.
- (b) To be eligible to be Appointed or re-Appointed (as applicable) as a Coach by a Club, League or Football Body, all:
  - (i) Persons who have never previously been Accredited must become Accredited; and
  - (ii) current Coaches must re-apply annually for Accreditation,  
in accordance with this Policy.
- (c) Coaching Accreditation, whether as a new Coach under paragraph 3.1(b)(i) or as a current Coach seeking re-Accreditation under paragraph 3.1(b)(ii), must be obtained in accordance with this Policy.

### **3.2 Club, League or Football Body to Appoint**

Clubs, Leagues or Football Bodies must:

- (a) only Appoint a Person as a Coach if that Person is Accredited in accordance with this Policy; and
- (b) comply with all other relevant policies, rules and guidelines in respect of Appointing a Person as a Coach including (without limitation) the National Child Protection Policy,

and failure to do so is a breach of this Policy which constitutes grounds for imposition of a sanction on the Club, League or Football Body in accordance with the Member Protection Policy.

### **3.3 Meaning of Accreditation**

For clarity, AFL does not represent that any particular Person is, by having obtained Accreditation in accordance with this Policy, necessarily a fit and proper person to be Appointed as a Coach. Without limiting the foregoing:

- (a) it is a matter for the Club, League or Football Body Appointing a Coach to satisfy themselves that the relevant Coach is a fit and proper person to be Appointed as a Coach;
- (b) the Coaching Accreditation process exists primarily to ensure that all Coaches are required to satisfactorily complete the required educational modules for their Accreditation level;
- (c) as part of that Accreditation process a Person may (depending on the circumstances disclosed by that Person during the Accreditation process), be required to submit a National Police Check, the results of which will be handled in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of this Policy; and
- (d) AFL does not assume any responsibility in respect of determining whether an Accredited Coach is, nor does the AFL represent that an Accredited Coach is, a fit and proper person to be Appointed as a Coach.

## **4. Accreditation process**

- (a) Accreditation is administered by the AFL through the Coach.AFL platform.
- (b) A Person wishing to apply for Accreditation (or apply for re-Accreditation) must:
  - (i) be registered on the Coach.AFL platform;
  - (ii) log-in and accurately and honestly complete the relevant application form(s); and
  - (iii) complete:
    - (A) the relevant training applicable for Foundation Accreditation, Level 2 Accreditation or Level 3 Accreditation (as applicable); and/or
    - (B) the relevant update or refresher training (as applicable).
- (c) All information received by the AFL by operation of this Policy will be handled in accordance with the AFL's Privacy Policy ([www.afl.com.au/privacy](http://www.afl.com.au/privacy)).

## **5. National Police Check**

- (a) If a Person applying for Accreditation (or re-Accreditation) answers 'Yes' to the question '*Have you been convicted of or are you currently charged with a criminal offence*', or the AFL makes a request in accordance with paragraph 8(a), then that Person will be required to submit to a National Police Check and provide the results

of that National Police Check to the AFL via [coachregistrar@afl.com.au](mailto:coachregistrar@afl.com.au). The National Police Check must be current as at the date of application for accreditation.

- (b) If a Person's National Police Check discloses that the Person has been convicted of, or is currently charged with a criminal offence falling within the scope of the list of offences set out in Annexure A then:
  - (i) except as determined under paragraph 6, that Person must not be granted Accreditation; and
  - (ii) unless otherwise determined under paragraph 6, the fact of a Person's National Police Check status (i.e. that an Applicant is or is not subject to a National Police Check process) may be noted on the Applicant's Coach.AFL account. For clarity, the specific details of the Person's National Police Check will not be disclosed on the Applicant's Coach.AFL account except as set out in paragraph 7.
- (c) A decision under this paragraph 5 will be notified to the Applicant confidentially and as soon as reasonably practicable upon provision of the National Police Check results by the Applicant to the AFL. Any notification of accreditation to an Applicant pending a decision under this paragraph 5 will be provisional in nature and subject to revocation.

## 6. Review of determination to not grant or to revoke Accreditation

### 6.1 Review right

- (a) A Person (the **Applicant**) who has:
  - (i) not been granted Accreditation due to information disclosed under paragraph 5(b); or
  - (ii) had their Accreditation revoked due to information disclosed under paragraph 8(b),

may by written application to [coachregistrar@afl.com.au](mailto:coachregistrar@afl.com.au) have that determination reviewed by the Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) within three (3) business days of notification of such a decision.

- (b) The Applicant's written application:
  - (i) must set out why the Applicant considers that determination to be incorrect; and
  - (ii) may include any further information the Applicant considers relevant.
- (c) In reviewing the non-grant or revocation of Accreditation (as applicable) the Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) may have regard to any matter they consider relevant to the review, as he/she sees fit and in his/her absolute discretion in understanding and assessing the application, including:
  - (i) the nature of the information disclosed as part of the Applicant's National Police Check;

- (ii) the time elapsed since any charges or convictions disclosed as part of the Applicant's National Police Check;
  - (iii) any evidence of the Applicant's:
    - (A) good standing in the community since the relevant information, charges or conviction(s); and/or
    - (B) positive behavioural remediation since the relevant information, charges or conviction(s); and/or
  - (iv) any other information provided to or procured by or on behalf of the Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) that he/she considers relevant to the review.
- (d) The Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) must make a determination in respect of whether or not the original determination to:
- (i) not grant Accreditation due to information disclosed under paragraph 5(b); or
  - (ii) revoke Accreditation due to information disclosed under paragraph 8(b),
- should be reversed on the basis of the information provided or obtained under this paragraph 6.1 as soon as practicable after receiving all that relevant information under paragraph 6.1.

## 6.2 Appeal right

- (a) If the Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) determines not to reverse the original determination, then the Applicant may appeal the determination to the General Counsel (or their nominee).
- (b) Any such appeal must be made in writing to [coachregistrar@afl.com.au](mailto:coachregistrar@afl.com.au) within seven (7) days of the receiving notice of the Head of Game Development's (or their applicable delegate's) determination under paragraph 6.1(d).
- (c) The basis on which the Head of Game Development's (or their applicable delegate's) determination under paragraph 6.1(d) may be appealed are:
  - (i) the Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) failed to have regard to relevant considerations, or had regard to irrelevant considerations;
  - (ii) the Head of Game Development (or their applicable delegate) was affected by a conflict of interest; or
  - (iii) the final decision reached, or the decision making process followed, is inconsistent with this Policy or any relevant laws.
- (d) The Applicant seeking review may provide new information only if that information was not available in the first instance.
- (e) The determination by the General Counsel (or their nominee) is final and binding on the Applicant and there is no further appeal available in respect of the General Counsel's determination.

## **7. Disclosure of National Police Check information**

- (a) As noted in paragraph 5(b)(ii), the fact of an Applicant's National Police Check status (i.e. that an Applicant is or is not subject to a National Police Check process) will be noted on the Applicant's Coach.AFL account. This information will be held confidentially subject to the provisions of this paragraph 7.
- (b) If an Applicant is not able to obtain Accreditation due to their National Police Check status (whether or not the Applicant has utilised some or all of the procedure set out in paragraph 6), then that Applicant's Coach.AFL account will record that the Applicant is "not Accredited".
- (c) If an Applicant successfully applies for a review (or appeal) under paragraph 6 then the Applicant agrees as part of their Accreditation that the National Police Check and any information provided under paragraph 6.1 must be disclosed on a confidential basis to any relevant Club, League or Football Body proposing to Appoint that Person as a Coach solely for the purpose of enabling that Club, League or Football Body (as applicable) to comply with paragraph 3.2 of this Policy.

## **8. New information**

- (a) If the AFL becomes aware of information regarding an Accredited Coach which AFL reasonably considers may give rise to an inference that an Accredited Coach did not accurately or honestly answer the question set out in paragraph 5(a), then the AFL may require that Coach to promptly submit a National Police Check (or an updated National Police Check) in accordance with this Policy.
- (b) If the Applicant does not within a reasonable period of time comply with a requested made by the AFL under paragraph 8(a), or if that National Police Check discloses relevant information as described in paragraph 5(b) that should have been disclosed in the Applicant's application for Accreditation or re-Accreditation, then the AFL must revoke that Coach's Accreditation.



## **Annexure A | List of relevant offences**

### **Coaches that predominantly deal with children under the age of 18 years:**

- Charges of assault and/or violence on a child, whether physical, sexual and/or emotional;
- Charges of violence or of a violent nature;
- Charges of culpable and/or dangerous driving that can attract a detention or custodial sentence;
- Charges of drug trafficking, abuse or supply; and
- Charges relating to the exploitation of children.

### **Coaches that predominantly deal with adults over the age of 18 years:**

In addition to each of the charges set out above in respect of Coaches that predominantly deal with children under the age of 18 years:

- Charges of theft, felony and/or related offence of property or person;
- Charges of fraud and/or any activity related to fraudulent behaviour; and
- Embezzlement or any impropriety relating to monies or property.