

Welcome back to another season of our favourite Football brand!

Not only is it our favourite but it is clearly Australia's favourite and overwhelmingly so!

Recent government statistics reveal our hidden secret, Australian Sports Commission (ASC) data released by Football Federation Australia (FFA) has put football as number one in club based participation sport, figures that ring true not only nationally but also across Northern NSW.

Football is Australia's most popular club-based participation sport for adults and children because it is the most inclusive and accessible. Everyone is welcome in football regardless of gender, age, ability or background.

Over 1.1 million players and 4.5 % of Australia's total population base play our game now, add to that all the volunteers and supporters and the figures are staggering!

As Football Mid North Coast Chairman I am proud of the games continued growth and presence in every community across the Mid North Coast.

**'The total number of registered players in Northern NSW alone has grown by 42% in the last decade to a record figure of 64,186 players for 2016.**

**In our zone, in the 2016 season, junior numbers have increased 7.3%, seniors are up a staggering 16.8% giving a total of 6,400 players participating in the World Game!.'**

Aside from the international profile of the game, key drivers for this growth continue to be football's appeal as a great game and its attractiveness to all ages and abilities for men, women, boys and girls, with huge growth in the number of females participating.

It also reflects the accessibility of our game, with 28 clubs across the mid North Coast and the great value for money and affordability for those seeking to participate in sport, something that we have achieved through the stabilization of registration fees by sound financial management and the support of major financial partners in Community Football such as the Newcastle Permanent Building Society and all our other valued sponsors, 2017 will see no increase in fees to NNSWF or FMNC.

Importantly, the result also vindicates the countless hours and significant contribution made weekly by thousands of volunteers in effectively providing participation opportunities to players of all ages and skill levels at grounds right across our Zone.

Added to that we see ALDI on board as a National supporter to promote and sponsor the Mini Roos, our next generation of Footballers boys and girls again demonstrating the enormous reach and potential of our game.

But the continued growth of the 'World Game' across the Mid North Coast is not without its challenges.

As our game continues to grow, we face a number of challenges, including increased pressure on facilities with added demands for drainage, lighting and amenities, as some clubs are stretched to accommodate the player demand in their area.

As the governing body for the game, our responsibility is not only to grow participation but to ensure we partner with Local Government Authority's, State and Federal Government and the individual clubs themselves in providing facilities that can cater for the demands of our game both now and well into the future, for we know that with the increased profile of the Hyundai A-League, Westfield W-League and our men's and women's teams participation on the world stage within Asia and the FIFA World Cup, this is just the beginning of football's rise.

To that aim I with the support of the Board and Administration continue the push to be recognized at all levels of government for funding assistance and increased and improved facilities across our entire Zone.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank retiring board members Rick Naylor and Paul Berg for their invaluable contribution over the past number of years and welcome replacements filling these casual vacancies Dan Lynch and David Lee.

I would also like to congratulate Jonathan Newman and Mark Woodward on their re election to the board at the AGM and also my enormous gratitude to all the clubs for endorsing me for another term and to my fellow board members for having faith in my passion and ability to lead this dedicated team for another season.

I would also like to welcome Larissa Sultana back to the office as she embraces the newly created role involving administration of the Referees and match officials as well as overseeing Premier league and associated competition duties.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our first ever combined seminar in February 5th at Lauriton Services Club with details to be sent to all clubs and on our web site.

I have put together a local player recruitment television campaign for the first time in our history and will continue to drive the marketing and promotion of our game to bring the joy and passion of our Football family to an even greater audience and build on our player and supporter base moving forward.

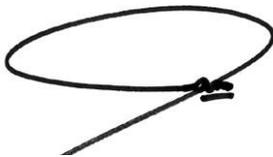
These adds are running as we speak and in to February as we open up our registrations.

I will continue to update you on a monthly basis and keep the lines of communication open as Bruce and I continue to visit your clubs and find out what we can do for you as the season progresses.

So with the help and input from your board of directors, our General Manager Bruce Potter along with the professional support of Amanda Short and Larissa Sultana in the office and our Technical Director Larry Budgen, I look forward to facilitating our continued journey of providing Football matches, Facilities and Infrastructure to support all of you in our Football Family.

Stay tuned for regular updates and once again welcome back for another BIG season of Football and Family Friendship.

Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line and a short vertical stroke.

Mike Parsons