



14 Nov 2025

Mr. A. Issac
Chairman
Football Australia Limited

Mr Johnson
Chief Executive Officer & General Secretary
Football Australia Limited

By email:

Dear Anter & James,

RE: FA Academies

I am formally writing to you on behalf of the A League Clubs representative body APFCA.

As you are aware FA has revealed that it has developed a Football Academy program. This program is obviously in direct competition to the extensive and capital intensive initiatives of our members. Moreover, the FA's academy initiative has lacked any meaningful consultation and has been conducted entirely without transparency and collaboration.

The collective spend by A-League clubs on academy initiatives is circa \$12M per year and growing. This does not include associated investment in infrastructure. APFCA envisages that the combined operational and capex spend will continue to increase exponentially as clubs concentrate on generating revenues from international transfers.

Our understanding is that Football Australia has launched a pilot program without identifying any rationale or compelling objective. As members of Congress A-League clubs would expect Football Australia to identify a fundamental challenge, that had no other remedy, before choosing to invest significant resources and time into such a pilot program.

No NPL Club or APFCA member has been advised of any such issue. In fact, the reality is that the Member Federations manage the NPL programs based on a criteria set by Football Australia. Member federations licencing ensure all clubs follow these criteria to be a participant in NPL.

The football development eco system is complex and requires Football Australia, Member Feds, APFCA members & NPL academies to work together. The unilateral and draconian approach taken by FA on this matter creates a lack of transparency and destabilising effect that has already been detrimental to the game.

It is our firm belief that any issues relating to youth development pathways that need resolution, can be solved through better marshalling of the extensive existing resources and initiatives that exist, rather than FA becoming a confusing and destabilising additional “hands-on” factor.

Our recommendations are therefore to:

1. Either cancel the Pilot program or freeze it to the current participants only for 12 months;
2. Audit the role of all parts of the football ecosystem and associated pathways (FA down to grassroots) including:
 - a. Map the entire ecosystem and associated pathways
 - b. Review of the Skill Acquisition Program (SAP). SAP has not been reviewed in 17 years since it was first introduced.
 - c. Identify the roles of private academies in the eco system
3. The FDC and APL Football committee should meet to discuss the outputs of this formal review of academies at:
 - (a) A league Level
 - (b) NPL Level
4. This formal review should occur over the next 6 months so that a plan can be put in place for the 2026 Season. Recruitment occurs for NPL clubs from September/October each year

APFCA members are fully committed to supporting Football Australia, however we, like all other congress stakeholders require a consultive approach so that the game can move forward together inlock-step.

We look forward to meeting with you to ensure that a robust and successful academy system is the product of an optimal collaborative approach.

Gino Marra



**Chairman
APFCA**