



AFL Fans Association Survey Report 9 July 2024



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1. INTRODUCTION

ROLE OF THE AFL FANS ASSOCIATION (AFLFA)

The AFL Fans Association (AFLFA) was established in December 2013 by grassroots supporters who believed that the game's largest stakeholder – the fans – needed a collective voice. The AFLFA aims to provide fans with a strong and independent voice, ensuring they are treated as stakeholders who should be consulted.

AFLFA SURVEYS

In 2021, the AFLFA conducted its inaugural light touch survey to demonstrate its value. The results released in early 2022 garnered significant media attention. A second survey was launched toward the end of 2022, with results released in March 2023.

This third survey was launched in May 2024, promoted to AFLFA members and subscribers via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and email channels. The survey was also offered to AFL clubs for distribution to their members, with seven clubs accepting the offer to distribute it via their social media club fan groups. Additionally, the Herald Sun promoted the survey and it was also shared among fan supporter groups on social media.

In designing the 2024 survey, the following factors were considered:

- Maintaining consistency with the second survey (2022) to show trends while accommodating changes in fan experience
- Retaining AFL-specific satisfaction rating and feedback questions
- Retaining club-specific satisfaction rating and feedback questions
- Gathering more qualitative and quantitative data on common issues raised by fans and new issues from previous surveys

Fans were asked for their feedback on the following:

- **Main concern** as an AFL fan
- Identify **all areas of concern** as an AFL fan
- **AFL specific questions**
 - Overall satisfaction rating with the AFL
 - One priority for the AFL CEO to improve the fan experience
 - Best aspect of the AFL
 - Areas requiring improvement
- **Club specific questions**
 - Overall satisfaction rating with your club
 - Most impressive aspects
 - Most concerning issues
 - Suggestions to improve the club fan experience
- **Feedback on common fan issues**
 - Umpiring / Rule changes
 - Affordability of attending games
 - AFL gambling sponsorship and advertising
 - Fixture and floating fixture
 - Grand final ticket allocation and timeslot
 - Attending games, including interstate games
- **Affordability**
 - Impact of the increase in the cost-of-living on game attendance

- **Diversity, inclusion and combating racism**
 - Opinion on whether the AFL should hold a pride round for the AFL and AFLW
 - Need for the AFL to be more pro-active in combating racism and promoting inclusion
- **Illicit drugs use, violence and safety**
 - Need to toughen the illicit drugs policy
 - Opinions on maintaining or abolishing the current three-strike policy
 - Whether to introduce a “send-off” rule for violent on-field acts
 - Experiences of feeling unsafe at games
- **Role of the AFLFA**
 - Media engagement with the AFLFA
 - AFL engagement with the AFLFA on fan issues
 - Encouragement from clubs for fans to join the AFLFA
- **Demographic information**
 - A range of demographic information on survey participants to enable filtering of results by club supported, volume of games attended/watched, membership status, age and state location

Distribution

Results of the survey will be distributed as follows:

- The Herald Sun Newspaper
- AFL CEO
- Club CEOs and Presidents
- Media Press Release and AFLFA social media and email channels
- Other organisations, including Responsible Gambling

NEXT STEPS

Fans have expressed a desire for their voices to be heard and for action to be taken on the feedback they provide. There is a concern that the fan voice is not being heard adequately by the AFL.

In May 2024 the AFLFA met with AFL CEO Andrew Dillon, agreeing that the AFL and AFLFA will meet regularly to discuss and address fan issues. The findings from this survey, including fan specific comments, will be presented at the next regular meeting with the AFL.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FAN ISSUES

Main Concern

- When considering **the one main issue of concern, Umpiring / Rule changes** is the most common concern for fans (Gambling ads was the most common concern from the previous 2022 survey)
- **Gambling ads** are the second most common concern with fans saying that they are bombarded with gambling ads at the ground
- **Affordability** of tickets, club memberships, food and drink are the third most common concern, due to the cost-of-living pressures
- The **floating fixture** is not popular with fans who were told this was a temporary measure (during COVID), but it now exists due to broadcasting considerations. Fans want to see a full fixture to determine if it is worthwhile buying a membership, others need to plan well in advance to attend games and a floating fixture makes this difficult and more expensive

All Areas of Concerns

- When considering **all the issues that concern fans, Umpiring / Rule changes** also remains the main concern. Qualitative feedback from fans highlights that the frequency of rule changes is very unpopular making it difficult to umpire consistently
- **Gambling ads, Affordability and the floating fixture** are the next three areas of concern
- **Grand final ticket allocation** to competing club members remains a high priority issue

Fan Satisfaction

Fans rated their satisfaction with both the AFL and their club. Compared to the previous 2022 survey, the results are:

- **AFL Satisfaction: 3.1 out of 5** (down from **3.3** in the previous survey)
- **Club Satisfaction: 3.9 out of 5** (down from **4.1** in the previous survey)
- **On-Field Performance:** The primary concern for fans

Common Fan Issues

Issues commonly raised with the AFLFA include:

- **Grand Final Timing: 83%** of fans prefer the traditional 2.30pm AEST start time, up from 73% in the previous survey
- **Grand Final Ticket Allocation: 93%** of fans want more tickets allocated to members of the competing clubs, for the biggest game of the year

Gambling Ads

The fans view of gambling advertising remains consistent with the previous survey. Some of the results are:

- **Ban at Grounds: 80%** support banning gambling ads at AFL grounds
- **Ban on Broadcasting: 76%** agree gambling advertising should be banned from TV and radio
- **Revenue from Gambling: 62%** believe the AFL should not receive revenue from gambling

Promoting Inclusion and Combating Racism

In relation to supporting inclusion and combating racism:

- **Pride Round:** **53%** support an annual pride round for AFLW (down from **62%**) and **49%** for the AFL (down from **59%**)
- **Proactive Stance:** **60%** believe the AFL should do more to promote inclusion and combat racism (down from **66%**)

Affordability

Fans reported that the **increases in the cost-of-living** will impact their game attendance as follows:

- Spend less on food and drink at games
- Attend fewer games
- Bring their own food
- Not travel to interstate games

Illicit drugs, violence and safety

- The overwhelming view of fans is that the AFL needs to **toughen the illicit drugs** policy as fans do not believe the policy is working appropriately
- Just over half of the respondents would like to see a **“send-off” rule for players** who have conducted violent on-field acts
- Almost one in five fans **felt unsafe at an AFL match** which is a concerning issue

Fan Behaviour

These are some comments from fans:

- *“The **poor behaviour** of some fans detracts from the match day experience”*
- *“As I generally attend games with my child now, I choose not to attend away games, specially at night, as fans often are drunk and abusive. There needs to be **more areas for family attendance**, where alcohol is not served, rather than just one bay in the nosebleeds”*
- *“**Fans are now more aggressive** than any time I can remember”*

Additional fan comments in the [Appendix at Section 1.2](#)

Role of the AFLFA

Fans were asked to provide their views on the role of the AFLFA with the aim of ensuring the fan voice is heard by all stakeholders. The results as outlined in [Section 12](#) below highlight:

- **96%** of fans believe the **media should continue to engage the AFLFA** as the voice of fans on issues impacting fans (up from **93%**)
- **95%** state the **AFL should include the AFLFA in the consultation process** before introducing changes that impact fans (up from **92%**)
- **82%** believe that the **AFL clubs should encourage fans to sign up as members of the AFLFA** (up from **78%**)

Respondent Demographics

As outlined in [Section 13](#) of this report:

- Responses: **4155 responses** received, a **42%** higher response rate than the last survey (**2924** previously)
- Age Range: Respondents ranged from under 18 to the 85
- Team Support: The highest response was from Collingwood (**13%**), the lowest was from Gold Coast (**1%**)
- Membership: **78%** are Club / AFL / MCC members and **22%** are AFLFA members (**80%** and **24%** previously)
- Location: **39%** live outside of Victoria (**51%** previously)

Other Qualitative Feedback

In addition to the issues outlined above, the following themes are apparent:

- Fans are frustrated with the umpiring standards and the constant rules changes as indicated in the quantitative data as well in the fan comments. Refer to [Appendix Section 1.1](#) for fan comments which explain how the umpiring is negatively impacting the enjoyment of the game
- Fans have an appreciation for the difficult role of the umpires in making consistent decisions compounded by rule changes. There is a common question as to why the rules are changed so much particularly when contrasted to other sporting codes (e.g. soccer)
- With cost-of-living pressures rising since the inaugural 2021 survey, affordability is becoming increasingly important. The cost of taking a family of 4 to a game has become prohibitive for many fans
- Similar to our previous survey there is significant feedback from fans on the impact of gambling ads. Fans are most concerned that the bombardment of gambling advertising for their kids watching football is grooming them as future gamblers and normalising gambling
- A concern about the Victorian centricity of the AFL remains a common issue particularly in relation to the fairness of scheduling and location of the Grand Final
- Fan behaviour is an issue that is keeping some fans from attending, in particular for away night games

Conclusion

The top three concerns of fans are:

- **Umpiring/Rule changes**
- **Gambling Ads**
- **Affordability**

The **floating fixture** which is a particular concern for fans given that it was originally stated as a temporary measure during COVID-19 restrictions. The floating fixture impacts fans' ability to determine if a membership is value for money (based on what games they can attend), impacts commitments outside of football and for those willing to travel to matches, they face higher accommodation and flight costs closer to the match timing.

The survey results are consistent with feedback raised to the AFLFA. As outlined by respondents in this survey, fans welcome the AFLFA representing the fans voice on AFL issues impacting fans. We appreciate the recent meeting with AFL CEO Andrew Dillon where we agreed to meet regularly to discuss and address fan issues including the presentation of these survey results.

We are eager to collaborate with the AFL, media, clubs and fans to ensure the sport of AFL remains the best it can be for the AFL's biggest stakeholder – the fans.

Key discussion points with the AFL include:

- **Addressing fan issues emanating from this survey**
- **Organising a Fan Forum**
- **Collaborating on the 2025 Fan Survey**
- **Enhancing the fan experience, addressing concerns and helping to promote the game.**

3. KEY FAN ISSUES

In the survey, fans were asked to rank their “**Main Concern**” and “**All Areas of Concern**”. They considered a list of 19 common issues raised to the AFLFA, with an additional category for ‘other’ issues.

When asked to identify their one **Main Concern** fans clearly indicated that **Umpiring / Rule Changes** remains their top issue, consistent with the 2022 survey results.

For the “**All Areas of Concern**” fans could select as many options as they deemed relevant. Comparing the current survey results to those of the previous survey, we note the following:

- **Umpiring / Rule Changes:** This has become the top concern for fans, surpassing Gambling Ads from the last survey
- **Gambling Ads:** Fans continue to express strong dissatisfaction with the overwhelming gambling ads at the ground
- **Affordability:** The cost of tickets, memberships, food and transport has emerged as the third most significant concern, likely influenced by rising cost-of-living pressures
- **Floating fixture:** This issue remains a major frustration, as it prevents fans from planning for the entire season
- **Grand Final Ticket Access:** Access for competing club members is a perennial issue due to the high demand exceeding the available seats. However, there are realistic opportunities to allocate more tickets to competing club members, which the AFLFA will discuss with the AFL, presenting potential solutions
- **Game Scheduling:** The current games times do not suit everyone, and more daytime games may better accommodate fans

The table below compares the 2024 and 2022 surveys results for “All Areas of Concern” and “Main Concern”.

ALL AREAS OF CONCERN		MAIN CONCERN	
2024	2022	2024	2022
1. Umpiring/Rule Changes	1. Gambling Ads	1. Umpiring/Rule Changes	1. Umpiring/Rule Changes
2. Gambling Ads	2. Umpiring / Rule Changes	2. Affordability-tickets memberships, food	2. Gambling Ads
3. Affordability-tickets memberships, food	3. Scheduling-floating fixture	3. Gambling Ads	3. Affordability-tickets memberships, food
4. Scheduling-floating fixture	4. Affordability-tickets memberships, food	4. Scheduling-floating fixture	4. Scheduling-floating fixture
5. Grand final tickets	5. Scheduling- time of matches	5. Victorian Centric – not a national competition	5. Other ^
6. Scheduling-time of matches	6. Grand final tickets	6. Scheduling – time of matches	6.Scheduling-time of matches

^Includes noise/lights at games, fan proximity to ground and unable to watch the match on free to air television

Main Concerns of AFL Fans

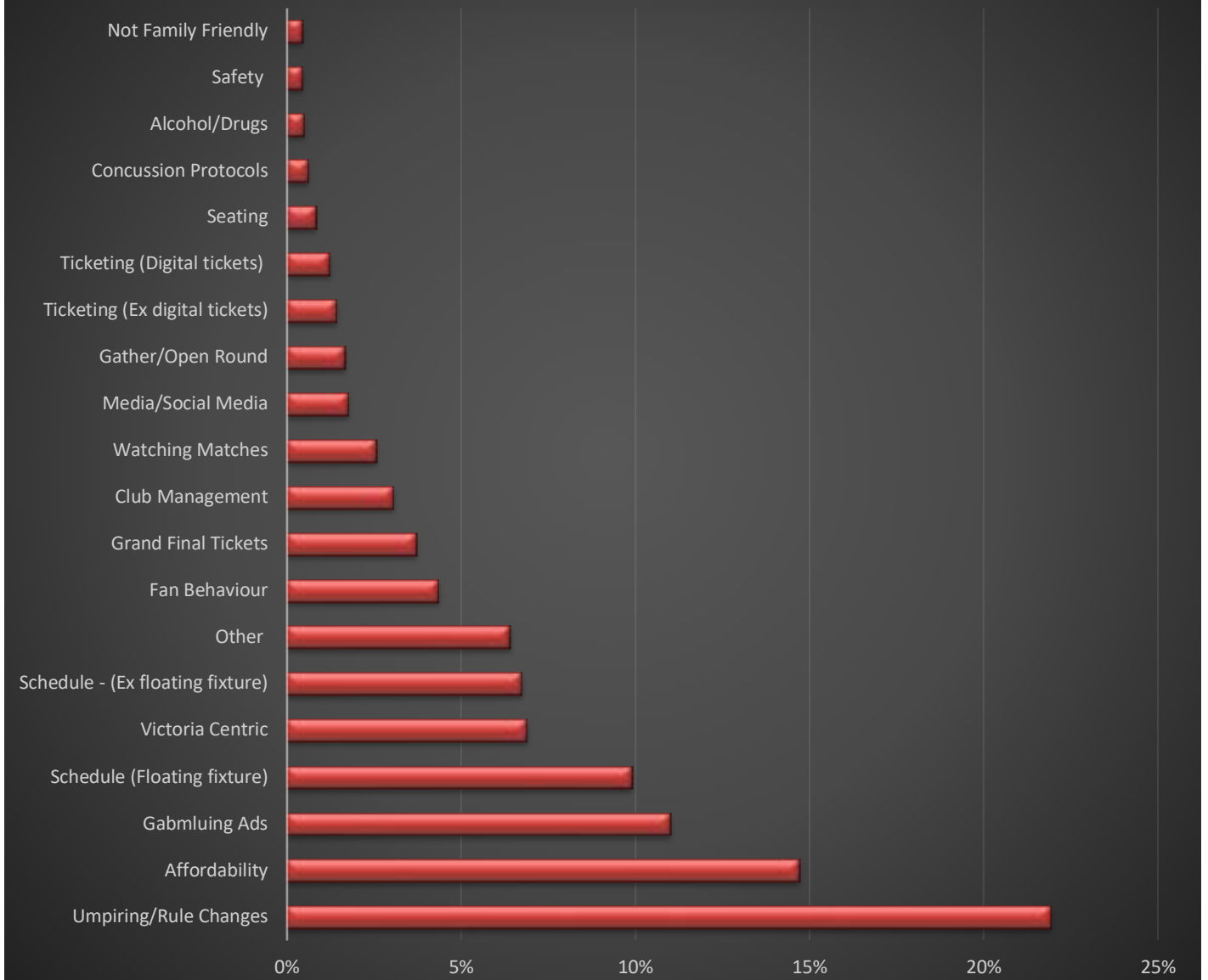


Figure 3.1 Main Concerns of Fans

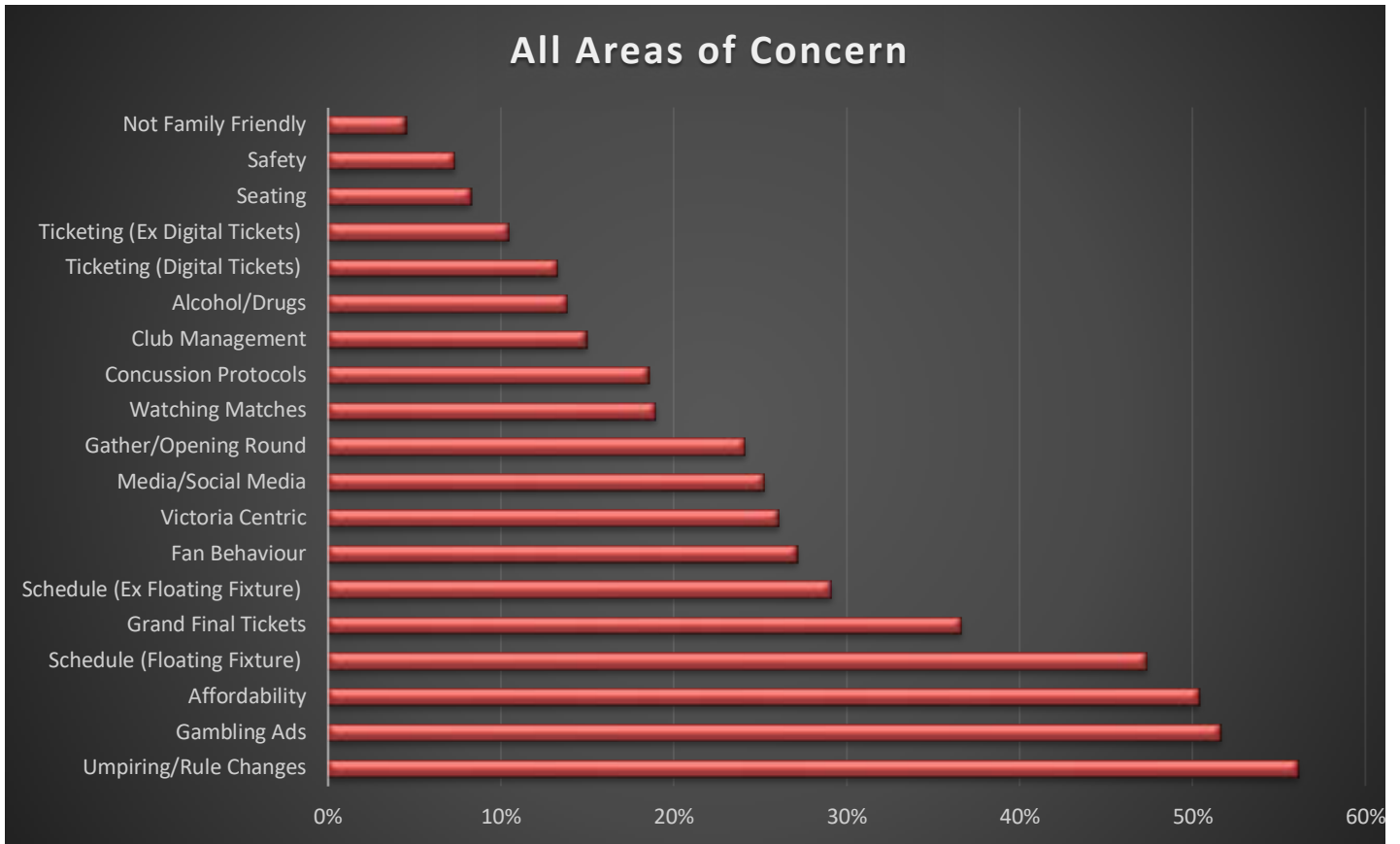


Figure 3.2 All Areas of Concern

Umpiring/Rule changes

This has emerged as the primary concern for fans. [Appendix 1.1](#) includes fans comments on this issue, offering a comprehensive view of why fans regard it as the number one concern and how it affects their fan experience and enjoyment of the game.

Gambling Ads, Affordability, Floating fixture and Grand Final tickets

These issues round out the top five areas of concern for fans. [Appendix 1.2 contains](#) fan comments on these topics, providing a deeper understanding of their impact on the fan experience.

4. FAN SATISFACTION

The survey reveals that fans are, on average, **26%** more satisfied with their club (**3.9 out of 5**) than with the AFL (**3.1 out of 5**). In the 2022 survey, fans were **24%** more satisfied with their club (**4.1 out of 5**) compared to the AFL (**3.3 out of 5**). Notably, both the club and AFL satisfaction ratings have decreased slightly in the current survey.

AFL Satisfaction

When asked, “**What one thing should the new AFL CEO prioritise first to improve the fan experience?**” fans frequently suggested:

- Immediate improvement of umpiring standards
- Stop changing the rules every year
- Abolishing the floating fixture and bringing back the full fixture
- Removing gambling ads from stadiums
- Keeping the tradition of the 2.30pm daytime Grand Final
- Allocating more tickets to club members of the teams playing in the Grand Final
- Having the bye round for all teams on the same weekend
- Starting night games earlier to better accommodate the kids
- Addressing the Tribunal inconsistencies
- Increasing the number of games available on free-to-air TV

In response to “**What is the best thing about the AFL?**” fans highlighted:

- The atmosphere at games
- A packed MCG
- Best game in the world to watch
- The skill of the players
- The passion of fans for their club
- More competitive clubs
- The excitement of the game
- The rich history and tradition of the clubs and the game
- The dedication of the players

Regarding “**What part of the AFL requires the most improvement and why?**” fans identified several key areas:

- Umpiring inconsistency as it is turning some fans away from the game
- Affordability of games to attract new audiences and retain supporters
- Enhancing the ARC technology for easier decision making
- Strengthening the drugs policy to address issues earlier
- Ensuring fairness in the competition, particularly for non-Victorian teams to play on the MCG
- The gambling ads at the ground, on radio and TV are at saturation point. It normalises gambling as part of the football experience, which is a major concern for young kids
- Rules need to stop changing so umpires can keep up with them
- Game schedules for interstate teams. Victorian teams are favoured too much
- Increasing free-to-air TV coverage to ensure equality for a truly national competition

Game Satisfaction

Fans were asked to compare the current state of the game to what it was like 20 years ago. The responses were as follows:

- **37%** of fans believe the game has improved
- **43%** of fans feel the game has declined
- **20%** of fans could not make a comparison, as they were either not watching football, too young to remember, or not born 20 years ago

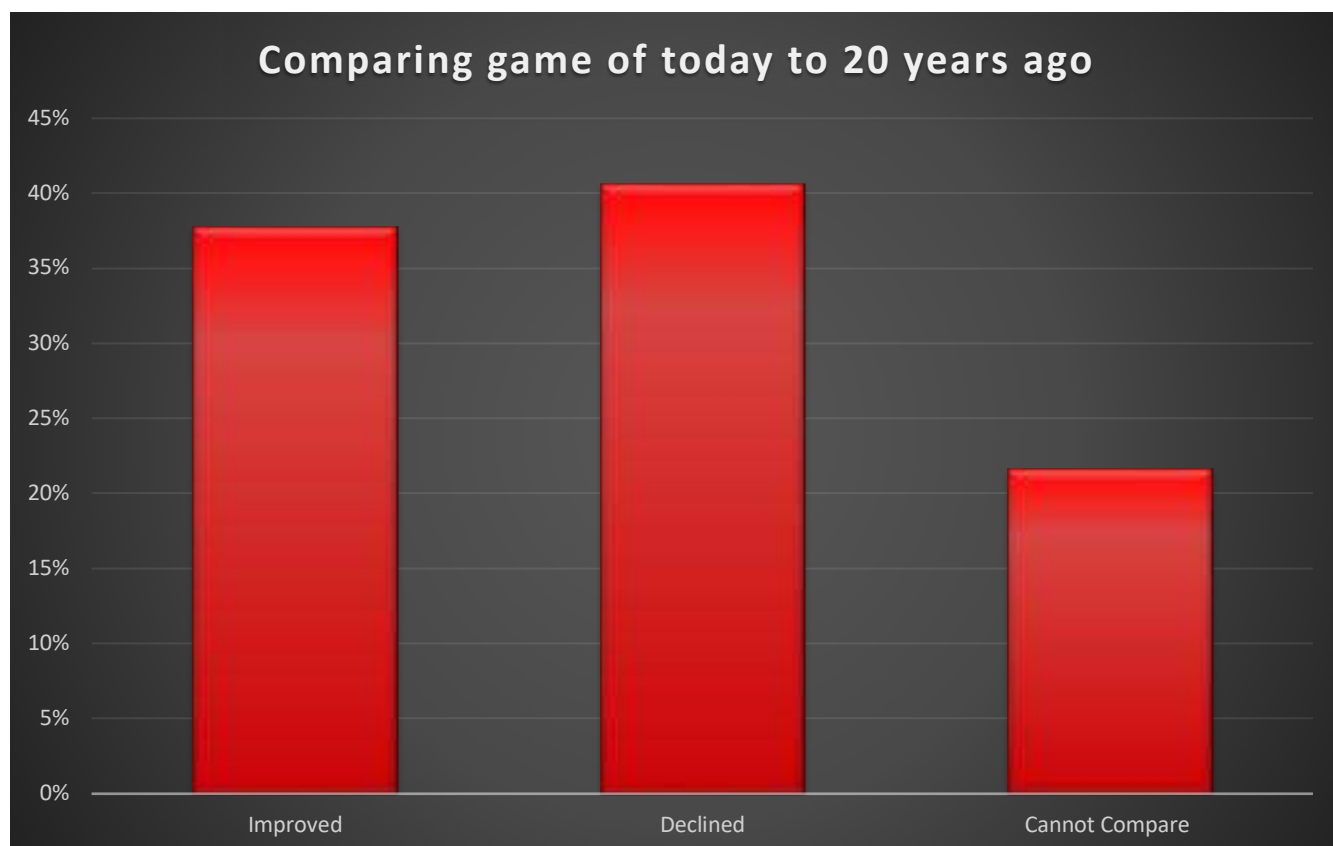


Figure 4.1 Comparing game of today to 20 years ago

Fans were asked, “If you have attended one or more AFL matches so far in 2024, tell us what you think compared to last year?” The choices provided were:

- My experience is **better** than the games I attended last year
- My experience is the **same** as the games I attended last year
- My experience is **worse** than the games I attended last year
- **Not applicable**, did not attend a match last year or this year

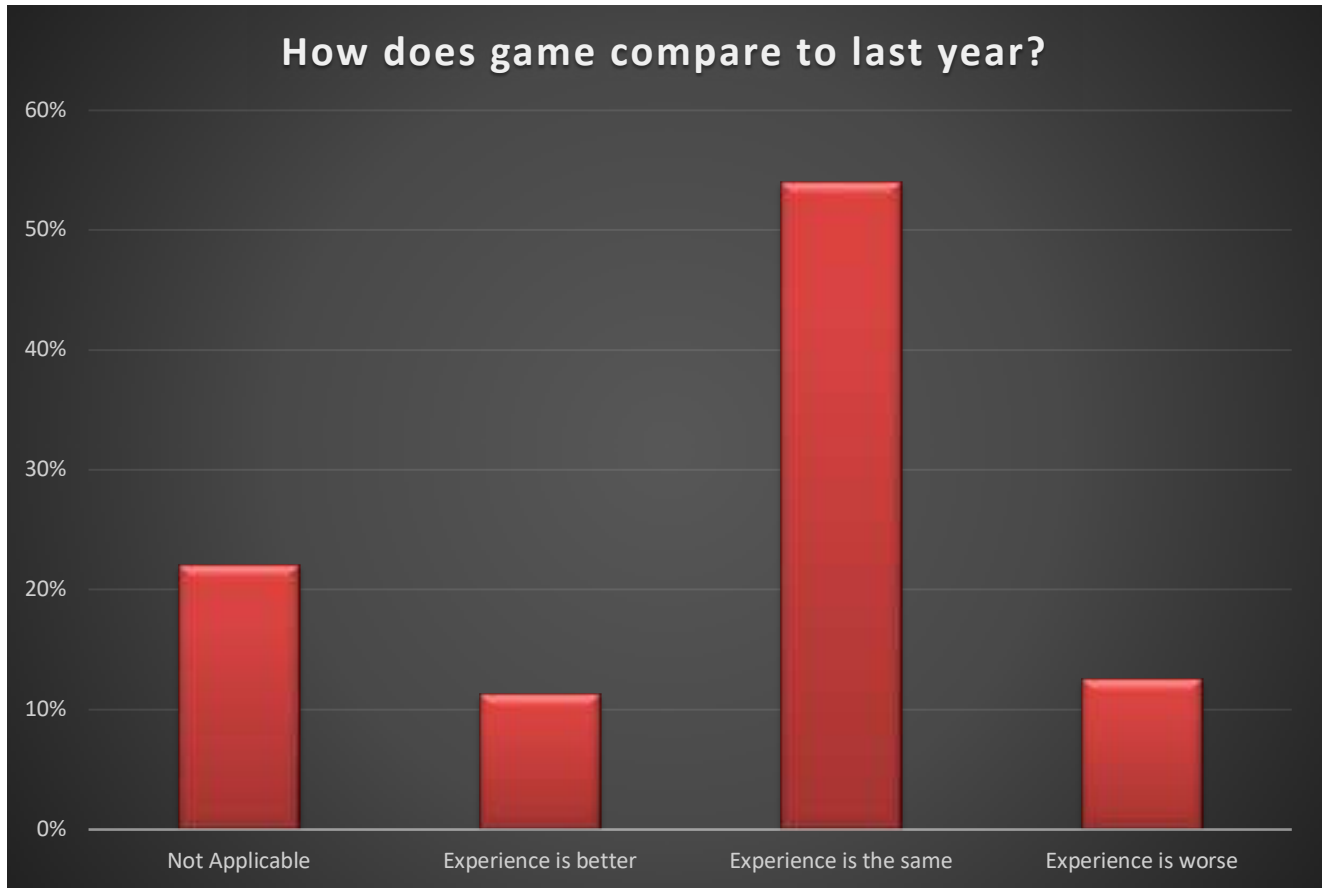


Figure 4.2 How does game compare to last year

Interstate Travel

Fans were also asked about their plans for interstate travel to attend AFL games this year. The options were:

- Opening Round - travelled interstate to attend
- Gather Round - travelled interstate to attend
- I have/plan to attend other interstate games in 2024 (excluding Opening Round and Gather Round)
- I have never travelled interstate to watch my team play
- I no longer travel interstate to watch my team play
- I usually travel interstate to watch my team play but will not in 2024

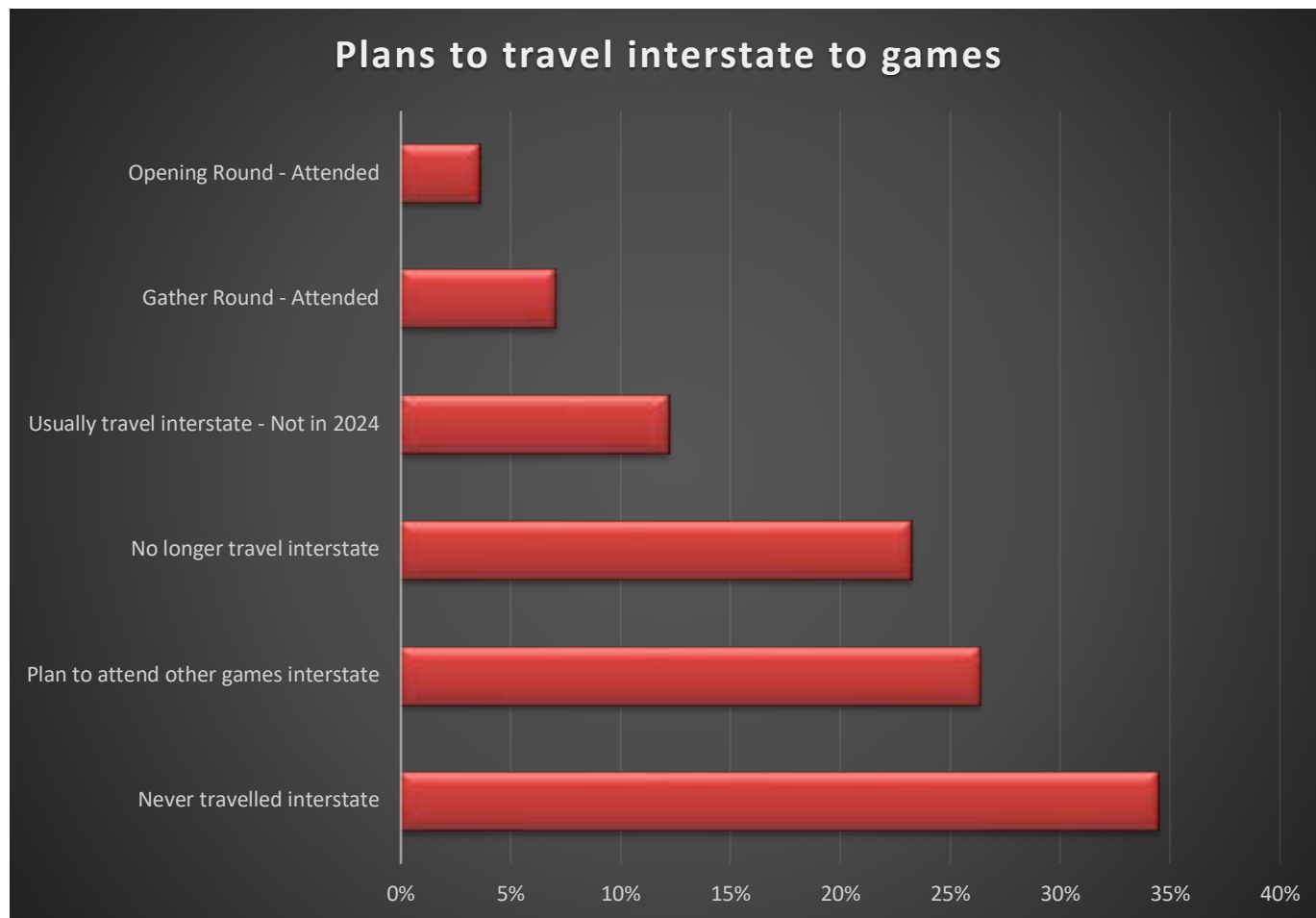


Figure 4.3 Plans to travel interstate to games

Club Satisfaction

Fans were asked to identify what aspects of their club they are **most impressed** with. The overall results were as follows:

- Club list, recruitment and retention of players
- Performance in the competition
- Governance and management of the club
- Diversity and inclusion, including the treatment of indigenous players
- Communication
- Other
- Service responsiveness
- Pricing and affordability of memberships
- Seating - concerns about how my seats are allocated

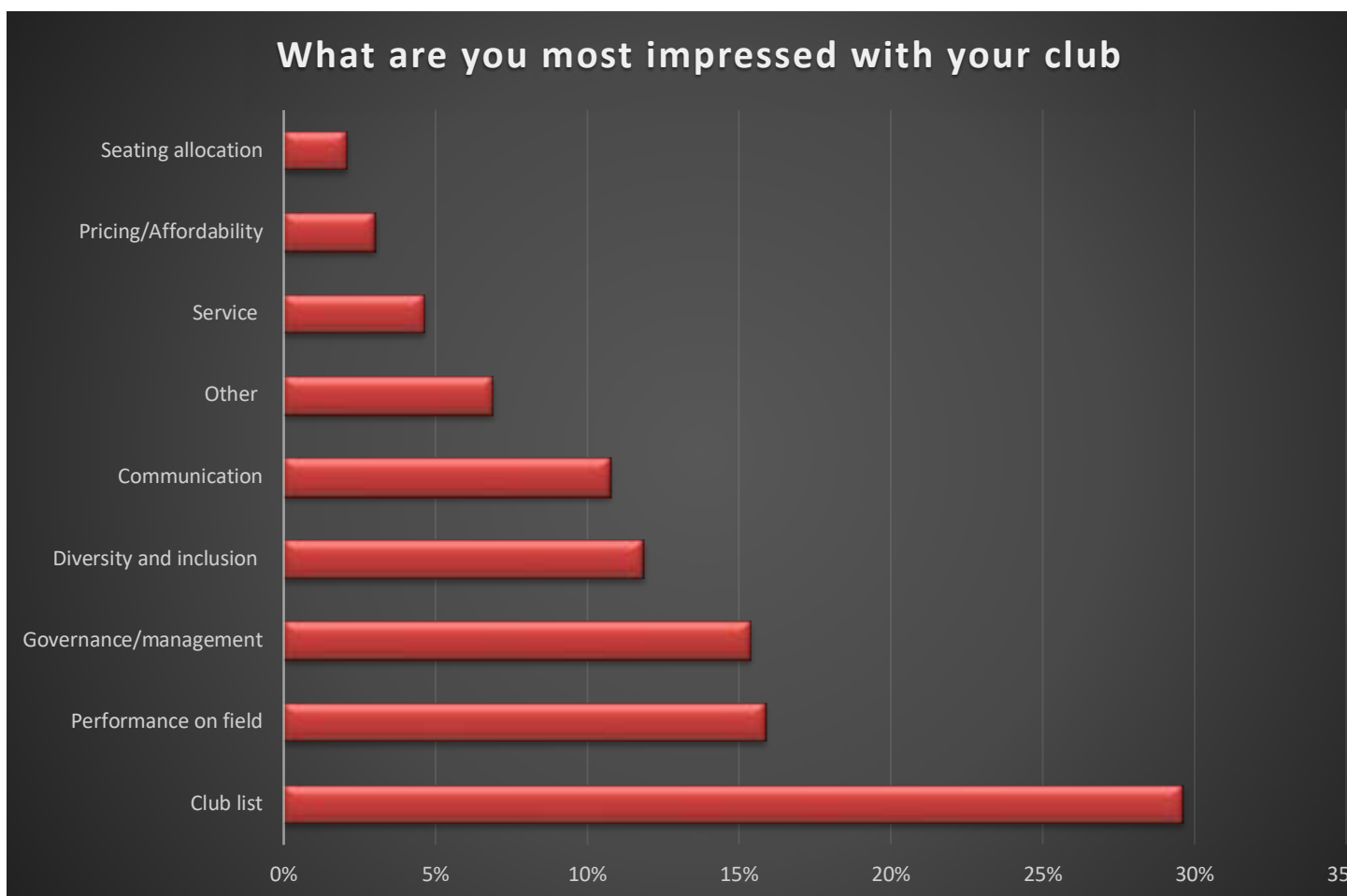


Figure 4.4 What are you most impressed with your club

Fans were also asked to identify their primary concerns regarding their club. The overall results were as follows:

- Performance in the competition
- Club list, recruitment and retention of players
- Other
- Pricing and affordability of memberships
- Governance and management of the club
- Communication
- Seating - concerns about how seats are allocated
- Diversity and inclusion
- Service responsiveness

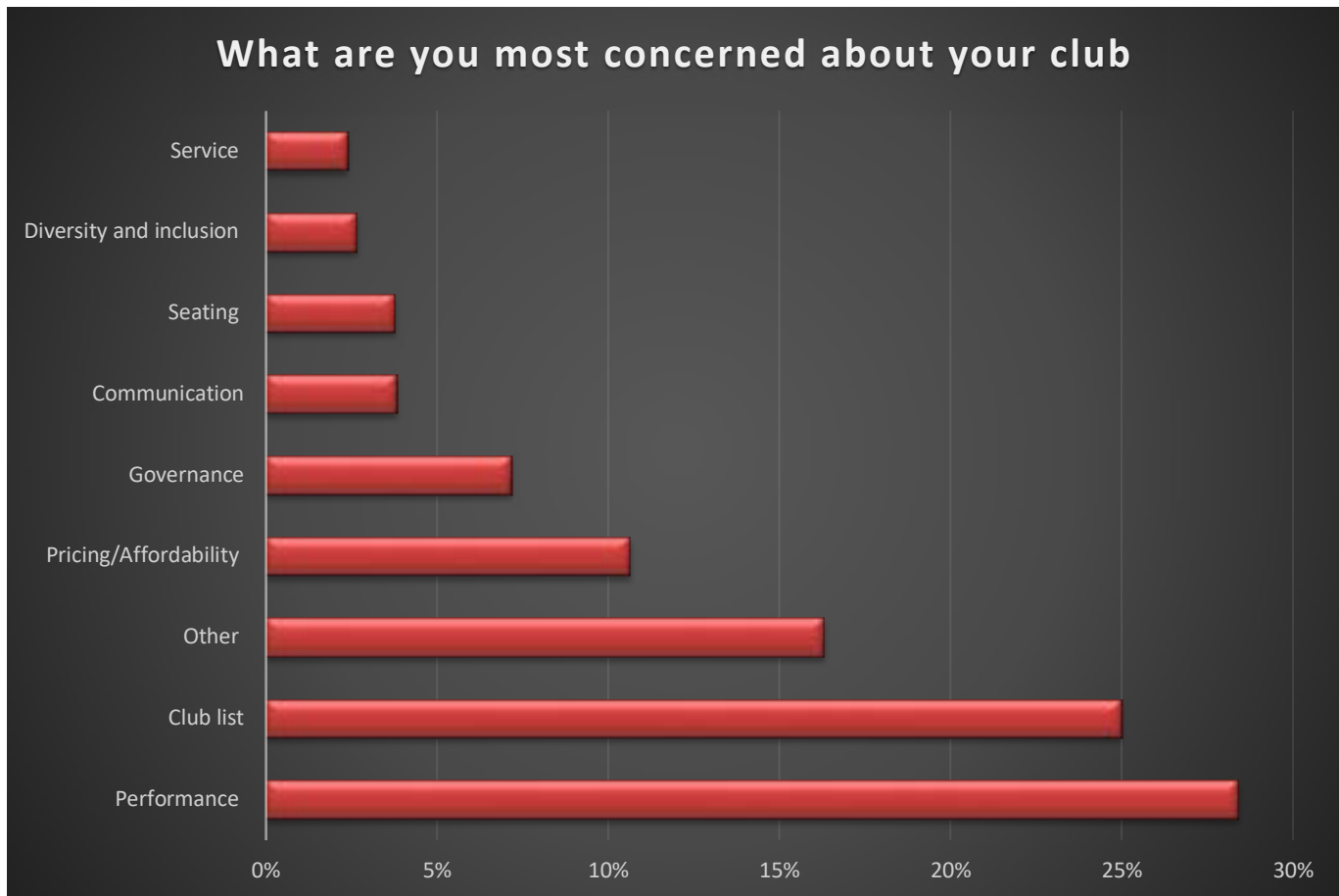


Figure 4.5 What are you most concerned about your club

5. AFFORDABILITY OF ATTENDING GAMES

To understand how increases in the cost-of-living affects fan attendance at the football games, we asked fans to select all applicable options. The results were as follows:

- We plan to attend the same number of games but spend less on food/drink 35%
- No change – no impact 28%
- We will take more of our own food and drink 27%
- We will attend less games of football 18%
- We will not travel to any interstate games but usually do 10%
- We will not spend extra on reserved seats 9%
- I don't attend matches 8%
- We have downgraded our membership this year 6%
- We haven't bought a membership this year but usually do 3%
- Other 2%

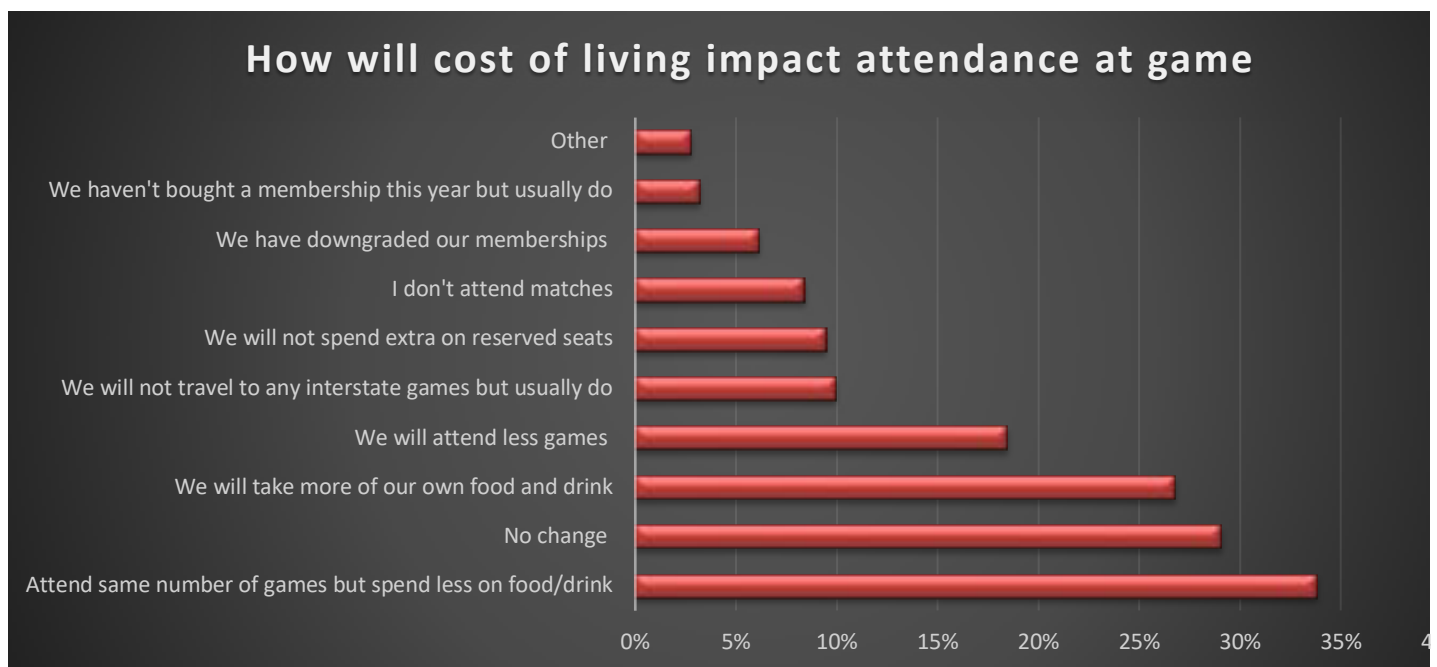


Figure 5.1 How will cost-of-living impact attendance at game

Fan Comments on Affordability

- Food and drink prices are over the top
- We still attend all our home games but very rarely do we buy drinks or food
- Will be reducing our memberships and sharing seats. Prices (including food and drink) are just a joke
- We have nearly always taken our own food and drink
- We will probably be rethinking our memberships for next year
- Simply not a luxury I can afford as much anymore
- Given a fully ticketed away game cost \$70 for a seat, I will not be attending many away games
- Cost of food, getting to ground etc is getting out of control and we will need to consider maybe giving up our seats which we have had for over forty years
- It further dissuades us from purchasing memberships. There should be a core emphasis on affordability of membership, footy is supposed to be accessible, not a luxury
- Definitely impacting on affordability to travel with whole family. Not specific to cost of games but more the transport and accommodation costs
- I enjoy a couple of drinks at a game. I had to pay \$15.90 for a can of spirits in Adelaide. That is obscene, especially when coupled with food costs. Totally unaffordable to treat your family to a day at the footy now
- Depending on how the cost-of-living situation continues, next season we will have to reconsider our membership
- The cost of airfares + combined with the AFLs shameless Victorian bias floating schedules means it's prohibitive to plan for interstate trips to watch teams play
- Will now attend selective matches taking into account air fares, accommodation, meals and game day costs
- I would like to attend more games but the cost of travel and expenses makes it impossible
- May have to consider letting our membership lapse after 20+ years if things don't get easier by next year
- Unless I secure cheap travel, I won't attend interstate games. Too expensive
- Airlines & accommodation providers hike prices up so it's beyond most members & fans affordability
- Always take my own food and drink to the game to save on costs
- I decrease spending elsewhere to enable me to keep buying my membership
- We are fortunate we can afford it but the cost of food and drink is spiralling and the food offer is generally below average - to be polite

6. THE GRAND FINAL

Preferred Grand Final Time

This topic remains one of the most common issues for fans, consistently raised with the AFLFA. Through various polls and surveys, there is a persistent and growing preference for the current 2.30pm AEST. Currently, **83%** of fans favour a 2.30pm start time for the Grand Final, marking an increase from the **75%** in our 2022 survey.

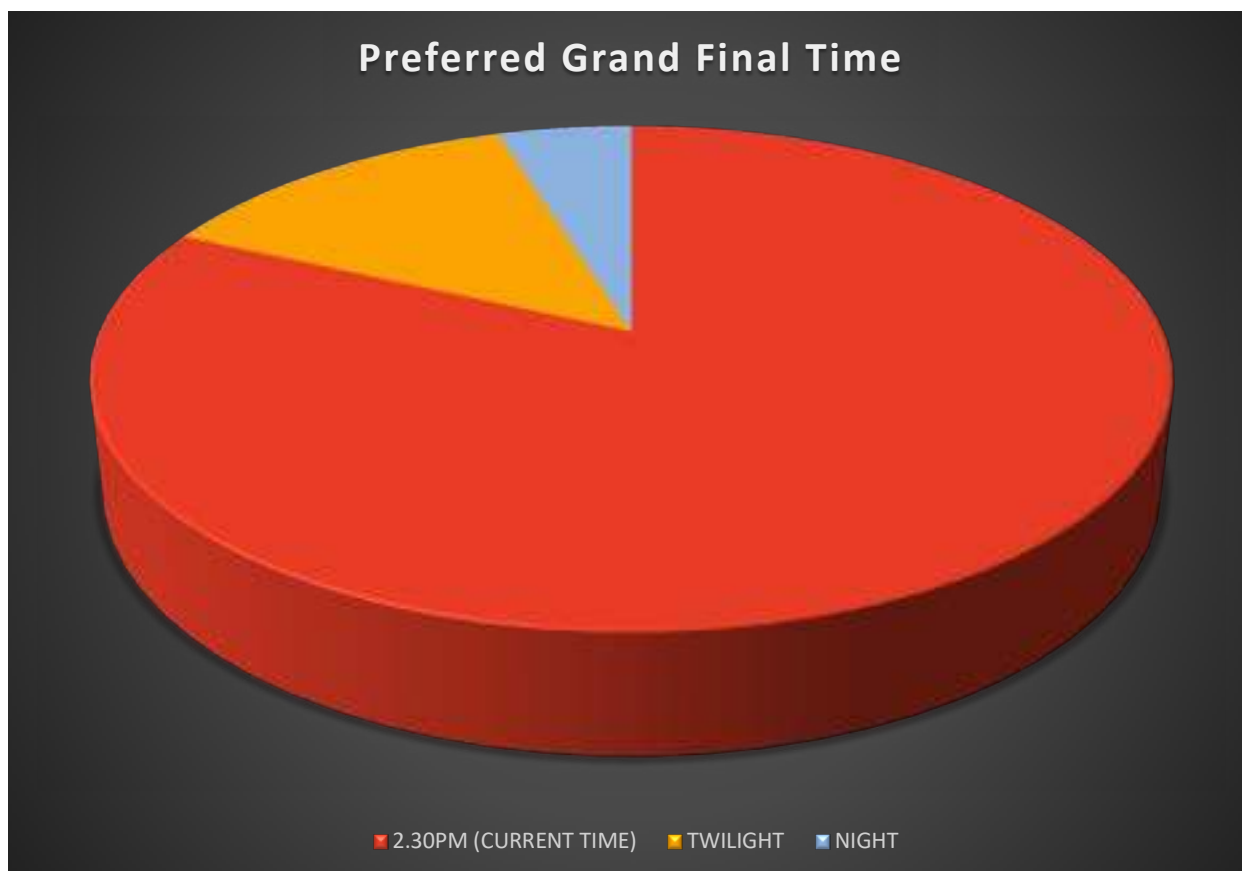


Figure 6.1 Preferred Grand Final Time

GF Ticket Allocation to Competing Club Members

93% of fans advocate for an increase in the current allocation of 34,000 tickets (17,000 per club) provided to competing club members for the Grand Final (**92%** in 2022).

Comments from fans recognise the importance of sponsors and revenue but believe the allocation needs to be increased given the importance of fans to the competition.

The AFLFA believes that there is scope to revisit the Grand Final ticket allocations and develop a plan to increase competing club member allocation. AFLFA will be discussing this issue with the AFL at the next regular meeting. We believe that there is scope to reduce the number of tickets sold for corporate packages and to redistribute to competing club members.

Following the 2023 Grand Final ticketing challenges for Collingwood fans, Craig Kelly, CEO of Collingwood, initiated a campaign to increase the allocation for competing club members from 17,000 to 20,000.

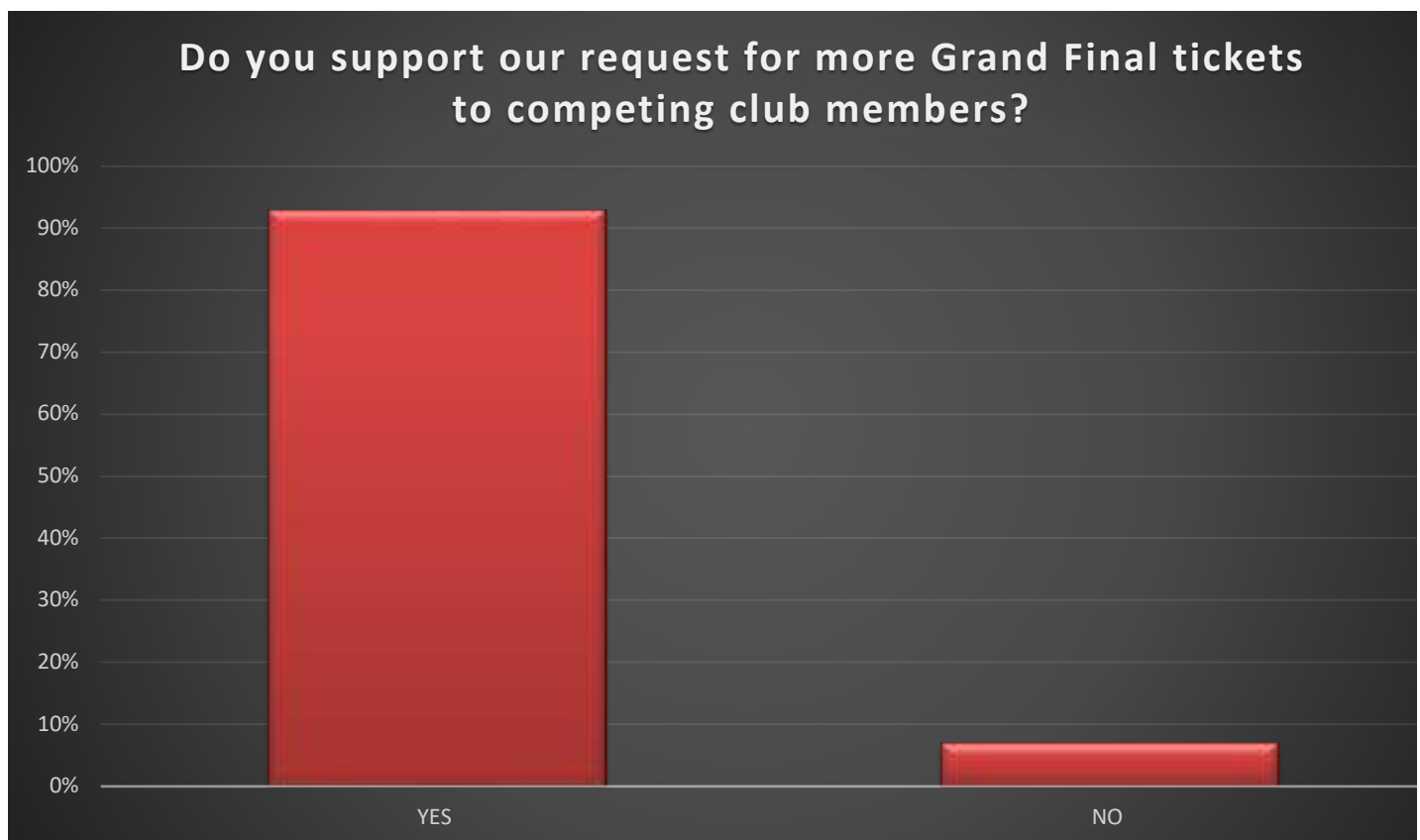


Figure 6.2 Support for an increase in grand final ticket allocation to competing clubs

7. GAMBLING ADVERTISING AND REVENUE

The fans view of gambling advertising remains very consistent with the 2022 survey results as shown in the table below:

	2024	2022
Gambling advertising should be banned from the AFL grounds.	80% Agree	79% Agree
Gambling advertising should be banned from broadcasting (including TV and radio)	76% Agree	76% Agree
AFL Clubs should not receive money from pokies revenue or gambling advertising	69% Agree	67% Agree
Gambling on AFL matches should not be allowed at the ground	64% Agree	65% Agree
Gambling on AFL matches should not be allowed online	39% Agree	44% Agree
The AFL should not receive any revenue from gambling (advertising, gambling revenue, other)	62% Agree	62% Agree

Figure 7.1 Fans view on gambling advertising

Fan comments

- Too many gambling ads
- Saturation and unescapable
- With young children, I worry about the impact and normalization / socialisation of gambling
- My 5 year old keeps saying the gambling ad catch phrases – “bet with mates” and “Shaqing easy”. It was funny at first until you realise he may grow up to be a gambler from these ads being in his subconscious from a young age
- As someone who has worked around gambling and seeing how much it can affect a family I don't think it should be promoted towards a young audience
- It's really bad for men's mental health
- Gambling is everywhere and makes it hard to enjoy the game. Hearing young people talk about the odds is not what football is about
- Hate being constantly subjected to gambling ads especially on AFL website & app
- I generally don't mind gambling ads. But what I don't like is when they imply that you can't have fun unless you gamble with your friends
- My kids now talk about favourites in dollar amounts. That is just disgusting

Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Gambling

The Parliamentary inquiry into online gambling published its final report in June 2023, titled “You win some you lose more”. The report comprised 31 recommendations, including the banning of gambling advertising during sporting events within three years. This timeframe allows major sports and broadcasters to seek alternative advertisers and sponsors.

The report referred to the serious concerns that children are being exposed to betting material, wrongly teaching them about gambling from a young age. The government will assess the recommendations and determine which to adopt, although no specific timeline has been outlined.

AFLFA Comment

We urge all stakeholders supporting the AFL competition to collaborate on a strategy to remove any revenue from, or promotion of, gambling activities. This action is necessary due to the detrimental impact gambling can have on fans, particularly, concerning the grooming of children as potential gamblers. The pervasive nature of gambling advertising at stadiums, through streaming services and on free-to-air broadcasters is of particular concern.

8. PROMOTING INCLUSION AND COMBATING RACISM

In relation to supporting inclusion and combating racism within the AFL, fans were asked:

- If the AFLW and AFL should hold an annual pride round
- Should the AFL be more proactive in promoting inclusion and combating racism

STATEMENT	YES	NO
Should the AFL hold an annual pride round for the AFLW?	53%	47%
Should the AFL hold an annual pride round for the AFL Men's competition	49%	51%
The AFL should be more pro-active in improving inclusion & combating racism?	60%	40%

Figure 8.1 Views on Pride Round

Fan comments included the following:

Pride Round

- Anything that reduces discrimination/ prejudice is worthwhile
- Men's comp not ready
- Why not? An important step and shows a lot to fans that identify with it
- Would prefer we stopped celebrating all these minority groups and just focused on the footy
- I don't feel strongly on this but my logic is that a Pride round is more applicable to AFLW because there are openly gay players so it has more meaning
- The round should not be called Pride round or feature the rainbow flag. If it is supposed to be about inclusiveness and diversity, then it should called Inclusivity round with it's own branding
- Inclusiveness should always be a goal
- Too many politics, just play the game
- I'm not sure. Do the players want it?
- Absolutely for the women! As it's a big thing in the community
- I actually don't really care either way...but if it helps people feel included then why not
- Inclusiveness is important in sport and it is important that all people can feel safe and comfortable watching our great game
- Many people in my family are part of the LGBTQ+ community. Removing pride games in other sports has legitimised the bigots and made them feel unwelcome. AFL is better than that
- Whilst I am a big proponent of diversity, I believe there are becoming too many "special rounds" which is ruining the magic. We can celebrate diversity in other ways. I say yes to AFLW as there are less special rounds

Inclusion and combating racism

- Yes. Racism remains a big issue in Australia. The AFL can do more
- Anything that reduces discrimination/ prejudice is worthwhile
- Sport should be sport
- Tough question, and I'm not sure what's best here. I'm a yes and a no. Zero tolerance for unacceptable behaviour I'd favour, but it depends what you mean by more proactive. Do we all need reminding every game?
- Doing enough as it is. Society has a responsibility too, not just the AFL
- I think the general public can do better, that's more the issue
- Racism is unacceptable, and some fans behaviours at games are atrocious, especially when it comes to racism/homophobia
- Not necessarily
- They are doing a reasonable job with this

9. HOW FANS FOLLOW GAMES

Fans were asked how they watch/listen to the majority of games:

	At The Ground	On TV	On Radio	On Streaming
AFL Home Games	46%	23%	1%	30%
AFL Away Games	12%	37%	2%	49%
AFLW Home Games	11%	43%	3%	43%
AFLW Away Games	3%	47%	3%	47%

Figure 9.1 Fans viewing habits

AFLFA Comments

Streaming serves are a critical platform for fans who are unable to attend football matches in person. It provides accessibility and convenience, particularly for away games, where there is typically a notable decrease in fan attendance, both in the AFL and AFLW.

10. TASMANIAN TEAM

The introduction of a Tasmanian team slated to debut in 2028 has been met with widespread enthusiasm from football fans across Australia. However, the team's license is contingent upon the completion of the Hobart stadium.

In a proactive move, the club introduced a \$10 Foundation Membership, which garnered support from over 190,000 fans. Regarding this initiative, we asked fans the following:

- Did you purchase a Foundation Membership? Approximately **15%** purchased a membership
- If there are issues with the stadium construction, should the team proceed? Just over **74%** of respondents indicated that the team should proceed regardless of construction delays
- Will the Tasmanian team become your team when they commence? **4%** expressed intentions to support the Tasmanian team as their new team

These insights underscore the strong backing for a Tasmanian team while highlighting the practical considerations surrounding stadium readiness and fan allegiance.

Fan Comments

- Tassie has strong AFL roots, they deserve a team
- Tasmania team should go ahead no matter what happens with the stadium
- Support inclusion but must be a quality venue suitable for fans
- No Stadium, No Team
- Bring on the Tassie team
- I think 18 teams was too many, 19 is definitely not the way to go and I don't see how a 20th team works
- I'm all for expansion, as long as it doesn't dilute the talent pool. As the game is already hard to watch, if the talent pool becomes thinner it could lead to some dreadful viewing
- Fix the competition first
- They need the stadium first, there is no point bringing them in without it
- Supportive of their entry but need a stadium
- Tasmanian team should not be contingent on new stadium
- Until GWS and Gold Coast are sustainable, no new club should be admitted
- Very much in support of a Tassie team I think they deserve one
- My second team. I grew up in Hobart.
- Tassie bleed footy. With over 150,000 people backing the Devils, it would be ignorant to deny their team when they have the backing of the greater community
- Should've had a team before GWS and Gold coast
- It is really unfair to expect Tasmania to build a new stadium when there are already two stadiums used for AFL in the state. The Tasmanian team will become my second team & I will support them however I can as I was born & raised there

11. ILLICIT DRUG USE, VIOLENCE AND SAFETY

In relation to illicit drug use, violence and safety, fans were asked:

- Do you believe the AFL needs to toughen its illicit drugs policy? **75%** of respondents support tougher measures
- Do you believe the AFL should get rid of its three-strike policy for illicit drugs? **66%** of respondents are in favour of removing the three-strike policy
- Would you like to see a “send-off” rule for players who have conducted violent on-field acts? **57%** support implementing this rule
- Have you ever felt unsafe at an AFL match? **19%** have reported feeling unsafe at AFL matches

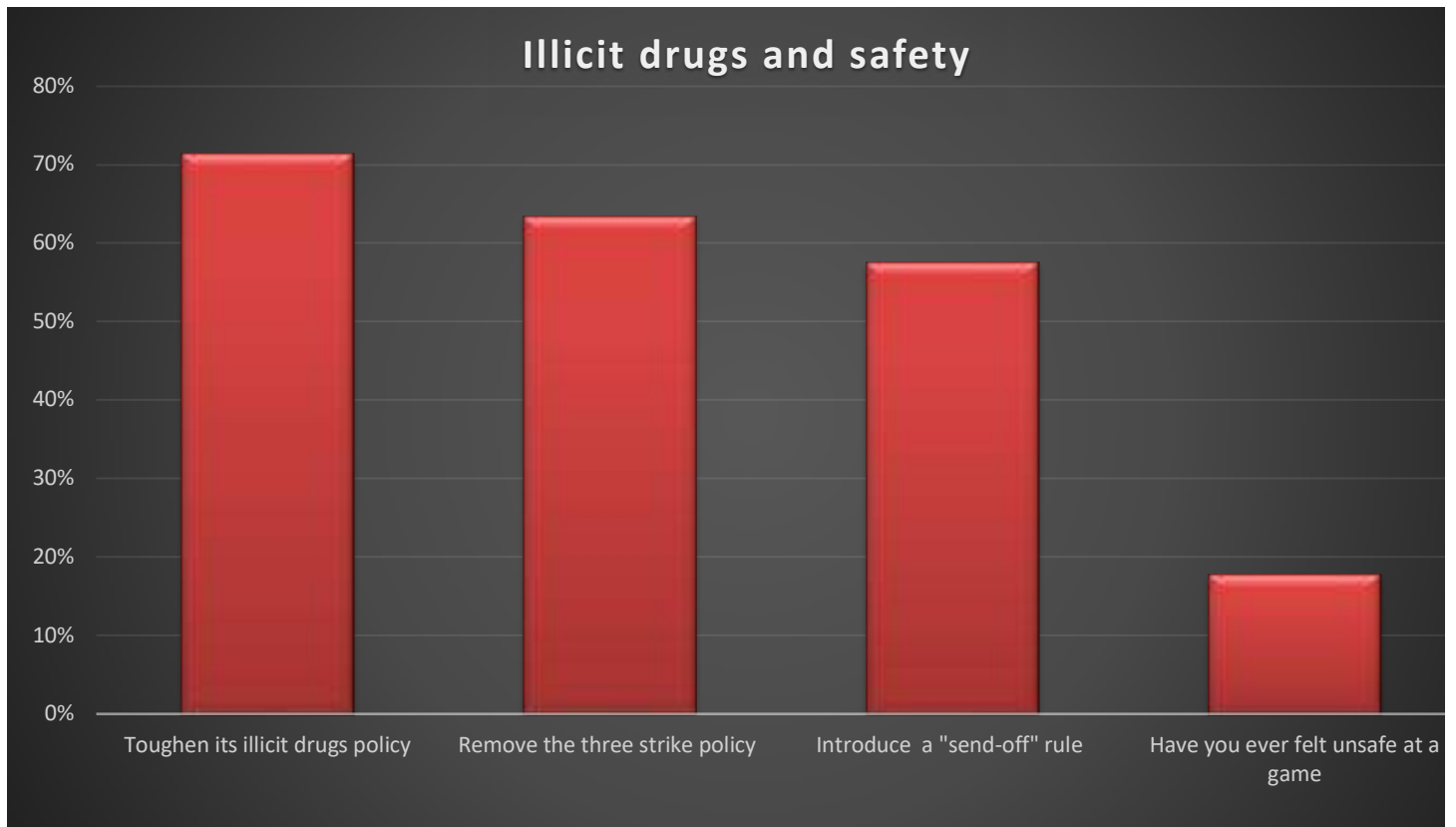


Figure 11.1 Illicit drugs and safety

12. ROLE OF THE AFL FANS ASSOCIATION

The proportion of fans surveyed in agreement with the following statements regarding the role of the AFL Fans Association (AFLFA) is outlined below:

- Media should continue to engage the AFLFA as the voice of fans on issues impacting the fans. **96%** of respondents supported this view
- The AFL should include the AFLFA in the consultation process before they introduce changes that impact fans. **95%** favoured this suggestion
- AFL clubs should encourage their members to become a member of the AFLFA. **82%** agreed with this statement

These findings highlight strong fan endorsement for the AFLFA's role as a representative voice in media engagements and consultation processes with the AFL. Additionally, there is considerable support for increased membership engagement between AFL clubs and the AFLFA, reflecting a desire for broader fan representation.

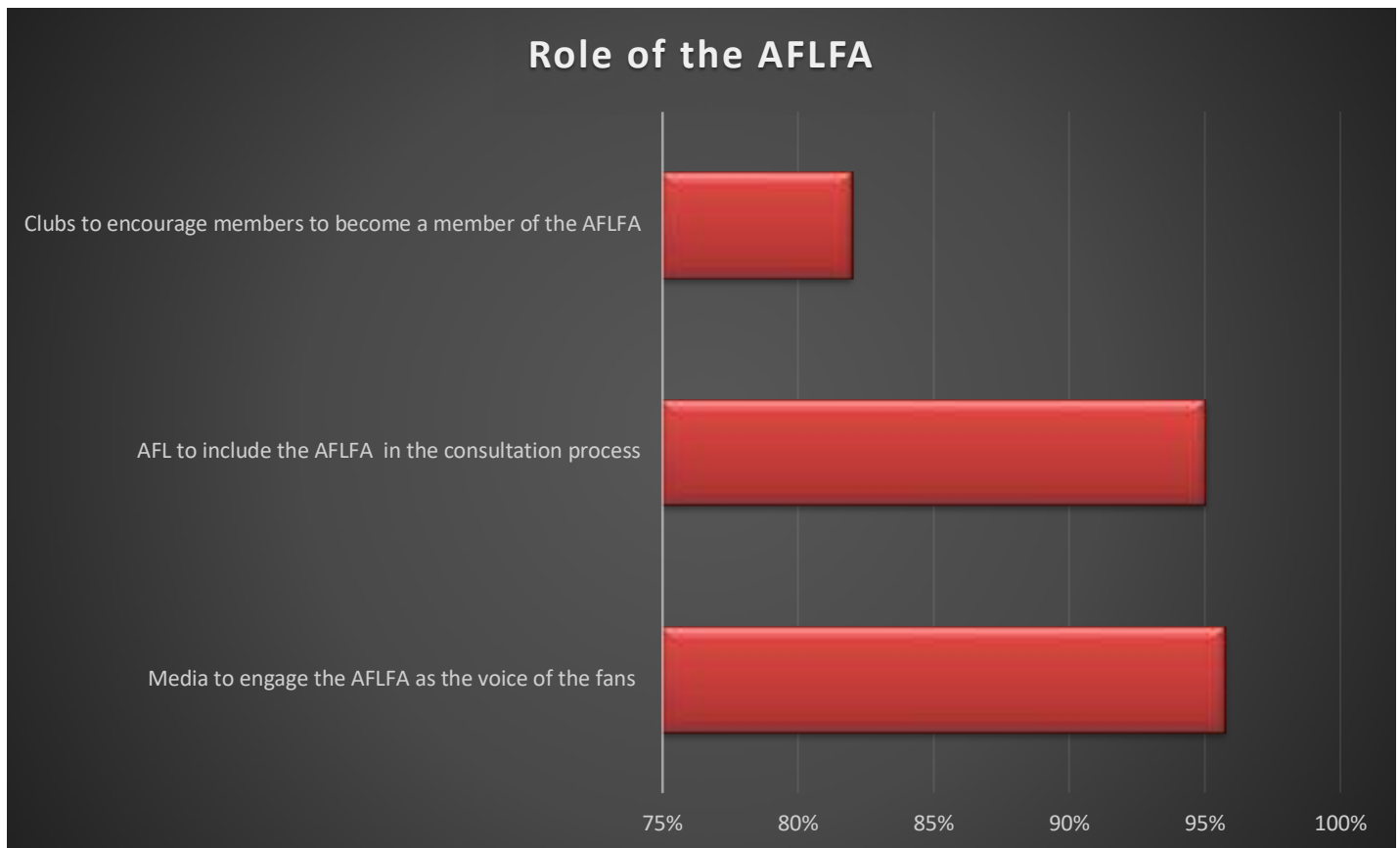


Figure 12.1 Role of the AFLFA

13. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

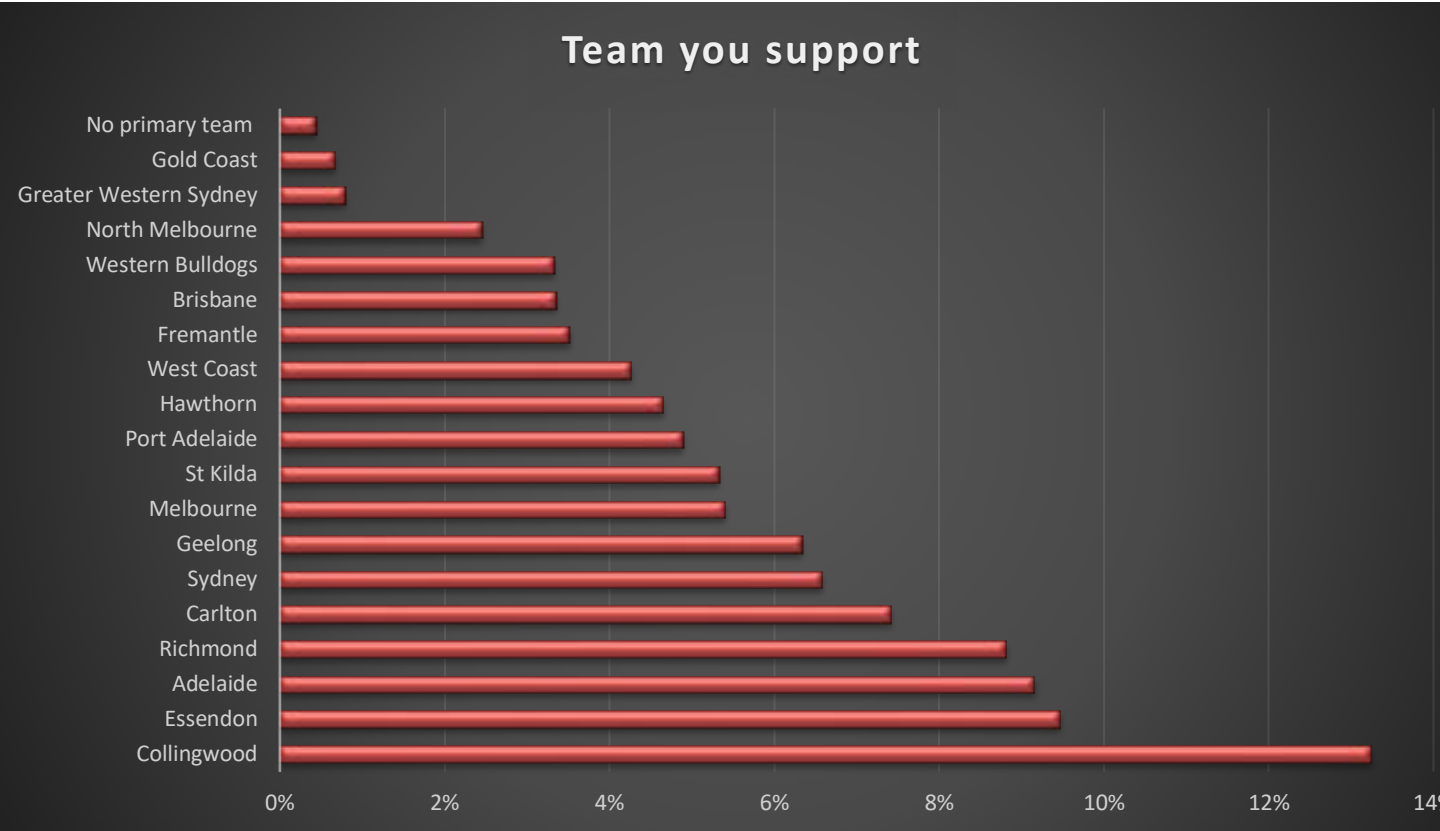


Figure 13.1 Team you support

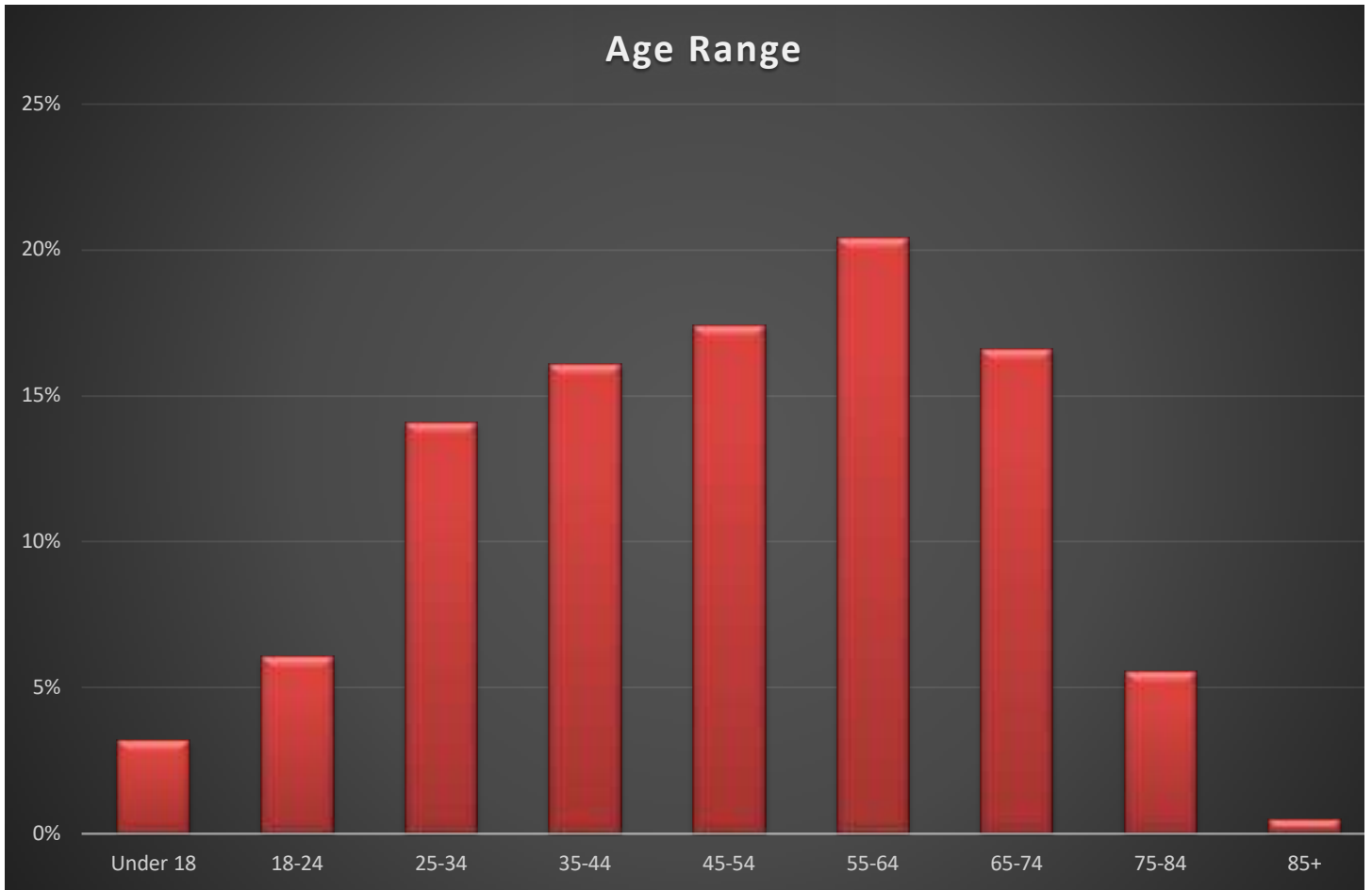


Figure 13.2 Age Range

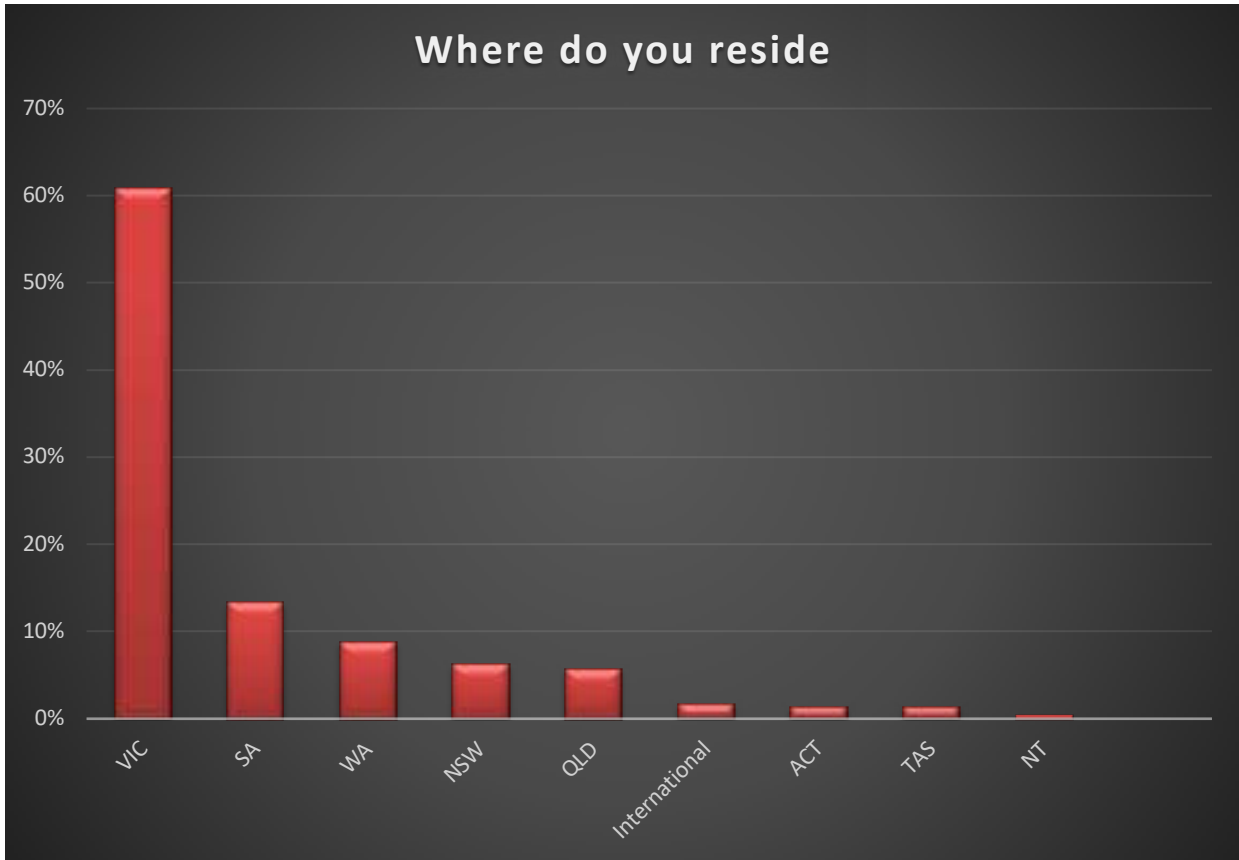


Figure 13.3 Where do you reside

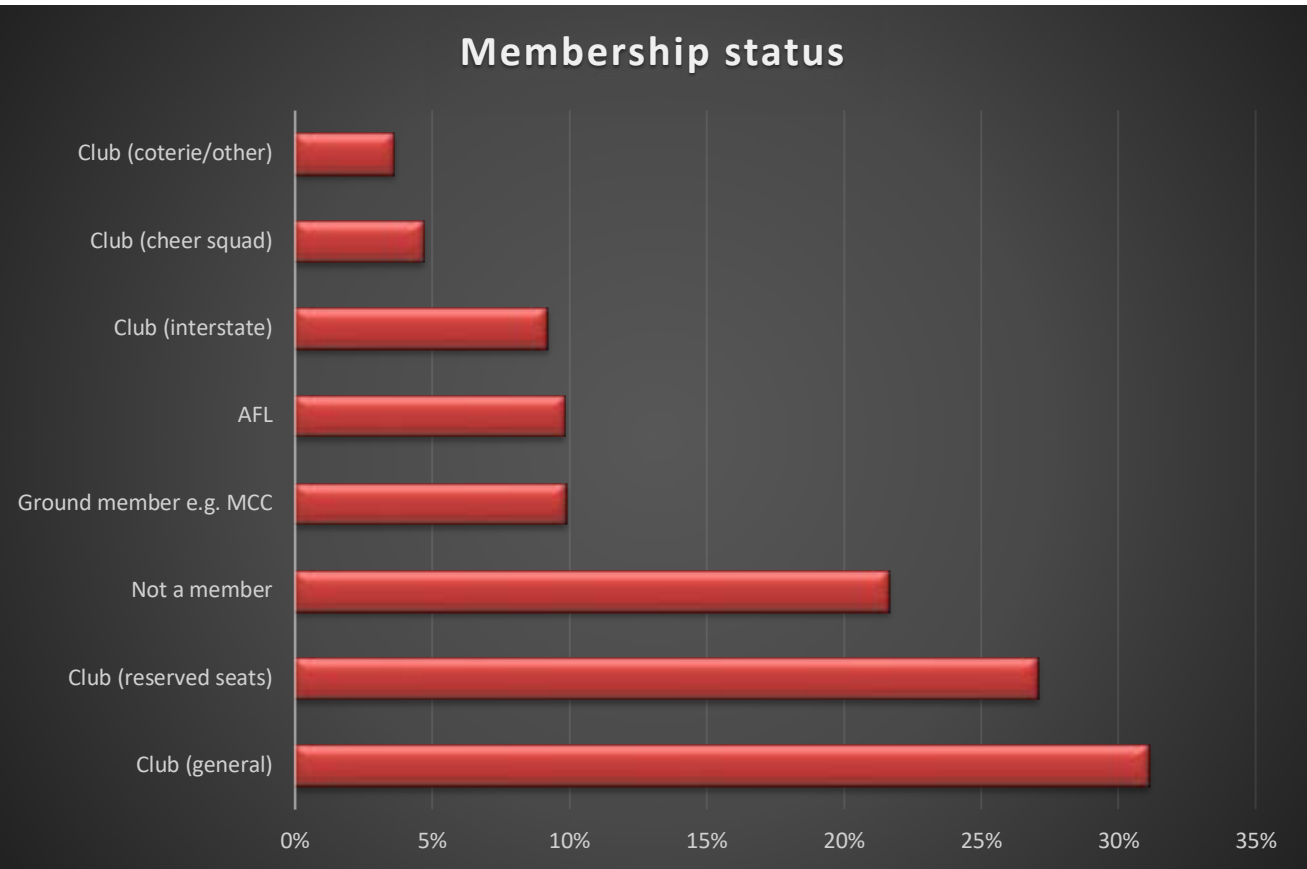


Figure 13.4 Membership status. Note: respondents may be members of more than one category

14. NEXT STEPS

The top three concerns of fans are:

- **Umpiring/Rule changes**
- **Gambling Ads**
- **Affordability**

A notable feature of this survey was to enable the opportunity for respondents to provide written comments, allowing them to elaborate on their issues and concerns. Fan priorities will naturally vary depending on factors such as geographic location (Interstate or Victorian) and personal circumstances (families with young children or single individuals). These comments have provided us with a deeper and broader understanding of the issues.

The survey results are consistent with feedback raised to the AFLFA. As outlined by respondents in this survey, fans welcome the AFLFA representing the fans voice on AFL issues impacting fans. We appreciate the recent meeting with AFL CEO Andrew Dillon where we agreed to meet regularly to discuss and address fan issues including the presentation of these survey results.

We are eager to collaborate with the AFL, media, clubs and fans to ensure the sport of AFL remains the best it can be for the AFL's biggest stakeholder – the fans.

Key discussion points with the AFL include:

- **Addressing fan issues emanating from the survey**
- **Organising a Fan Forum**
- **Collaborating on the 2025 Fan Survey**
- **Enhancing the fan experience, addressing concerns and helping to promote the game.**



APPENDIX OF FAN COMMENTS

Section 1.1

Umpiring/Rule Changes

- I feel for umpires as it's so complex with the existing rules but lack of consistency is impacting the game for players and fans
- Inconsistent umpiring
- Get rid of the stand rule
- Too many changes that don't make sense
- Lots of games officiated differently to others
- Seen umpires influence games to many times
- The game is ridiculously over umpired to the point when at the game the fans have NO idea sometimes what the decision is actually for. This is causing a huge disconnect between the fans and the game itself. Completely frustrating
- Rules need to be simplified
- Giving away a 50m penalty for something like not standing in the right spot which makes no impact on the actual game, but can change the result is terrible. The protected zone is also terrible when a player is clearly just running past with no intention of going for the person kicking is ridiculous
- Too many different interpretations of the rules
- Keep the game as it was. Hate the stand, sub and ruck nomination rules
- Hard to watch when you can't understand why things are being officiated as they are
- Inconsistency in the application of the rules. The jewel of umpiring would be for the rules to be applied the same to every team and every player by every umpire including the one in the ear of the 4 on the ground. This is not the case. I used to watch many games as a neutral but I no longer can because often the game is ruined by this inconsistency and incompetence. I really don't know how anyone could think that by adding a fourth umpire they would get less interpretations and not more. It defies logic
- Constant rule changes and interpretation by umpires impact the watchability of the game
- The game has changed. Umpires have a difficult job, made even worse by the greyness of the rule changes. Rules need to be more black and white
- STOP CHANGING TO RULES, WE BEG YOU. Already hard to umpire why make it harder with constant changes to interpretations
- Because of my age, I have seen a lot of football. I was also an umpire after finishing football in a country league. I believe the standard has slipped, very inconsistent between umpires. They impact too much on the game
- Holding the ball new interpretation is even more confusing
- Consistency of umpiring decisions comes up every year, and nothing seems to be done to make it easier for the games to umpire or for the umpires to be more professional (i.e., full time job with appropriate compensation, etc.)
- The sub rule. This rule is the worst thing to ever happen in football
- We have moved from having a small grey area in interpretation of the fundamental rules of our game to the majority of fans not knowing what frees will be paid and when. This greatly reduces the enjoyment and understanding of fans

Umpiring/Rule Changes continued

- Frustrating to watch these days. What is called one week or for one team is not called the next minute. Umpire interpretation of the rules often lacks an understanding on the game and relies on them judging what a player is thinking and not what they are doing. No common sense in decisions. Inconsistencies in decisions are the most frustrating. Favouring some players over others. The list goes on. It's the worst part of AFL and is making me want to turn off now
- Watching live the hold up with score reviews are frustrating
- Fans, commentators all agree that there is confusion in the game and the umpires are at fault as there appears no consistency
- The umpiring is the worst I have ever seen, if they are not going to pay holding the ball, get rid of the rule
- Being a community registered AFL umpire with 21 Years of Service and 350 Games, it's extremely confusing trying to explain some of the rule changes to people whom attend community football matches
- The very below average umpires change the games flow. There are too many umpires now so they all stand there looking at each other waiting for someone to make a decision. And when they do most of the time it's wrong. It makes this great game of ours hard to watch
- Because it seems every year they try to change our great game for reasons known only to themselves. For instance the holding the ball and incorrect disposal rule you would say these are no longer in the game because they are so rarely paid as a free kick
- The ability of umpires being consistent & making correct calls is a big issue. Not an easy job but with four field umpires they should be better. Constant rule changes do not help with their performance
- 98% of the time I used to know why a free kick had been given. Now it's a lucky dip
- Umpires are still not full time professionals and with all the new rules and interpretations it is showing. The rules brought in since 2017 have not improved scoring at all nor have they improved the look of the game. Umpires need to be held account like they used to be instead of the AFL just ticking off every decision
- It's blatantly clear that the AFL needs full-time umpires who are actually scrutinized properly
- Whilst the game is hard to officiate already and I'm actually okay with the current rule changes of 6/6/6 and the stand rule etc. What I object to is the interpretations of rules and those that are very clearly not being paid such as holding the ball and holding the man. The feeling in the outer with every fan I speak to is the AFL have changed the interpretations but failed to clearly state that to the fans
- Even the players and coaches have a hard time interpreting the rules & dubious umpiring. What chance do the fans have at understanding aspects of the game
- In recent years but especially in 2024 there has been very little consistency applied to long-standing rules. The main ones being holding the ball and incorrect disposal. It seems that this year the tackler is not rewarded, players can drop the ball and not be pinged, players are called for HTB when they have no prior opportunity and players incorrectly dispose of the ball i.e. throw it, and are not penalized
- Existing rules are becoming more ambiguous, new rules make it harder for the umpires and now there are four different opinions on the field. You can tell sitting at the ground the fans are becoming more frustrated with the game being adjudicated four different ways

Section 1.2

Gambling Ads

- Too many gambling ads
- Saturation and unescapable
- With young children, I worry about the impact and normalization / socialisation of gambling
- My 5 year old keeps saying the gambling ad catch phrases – “bet with mates” and “Shaqing easy”. It was funny at first until you realise he may grow up to be a gambler from these ads being in his subconscious from a young age
- As someone who has worked around gambling, and seeing how much it can effect a family I don't think it should be promoted towards a young audience
- It's really bad for men's mental health
- Gambling is everywhere and makes it hard to enjoy the game. Hearing young people talk about the odds is not what football is about
- Hate being constantly subjected to gambling ads especially on AFL website & app
- I generally don't mind gambling ads. But what I don't like is when they imply that you can't have fun unless you gamble with your friends
- My kids now talk about favourites in dollar amounts. That is just disgusting

Affordability

- I live in WA. The cheapest tickets at Optus are around \$45 dollars each. That's nearly \$200 for my family of 4. Add food and drinks and you are looking at a minimum of \$300 for a day at the footy
- Stops me from attending due to the cost of food and beverage
- Cost of living is rising across the board and being a regional based supporter aside from tickets, it can cost upwards of \$100 to come into the city to watch a game live.
- I would attend far more often if the game day experience was cheaper
- It costs me and my partner \$2000 for a 11 game reserve seat membership. \$30 for parking per game and \$55 for food and drinks per game. It's around \$270 per game of football with membership
- It used to be the peoples' game, a family day out. Now it just costs too much, when you add up train fare, tickets for everyone with a decent view, food and a non-alcoholic drink to the costs just takes the fun out of the night and it's not worth it. Rather just stay at home
- The price it costs to take kids I have 4 kids 8, 11, 13 and 15 yr olds costs me so much for seats I can't go for 3 games now it's about 200 for seats cat 4 kids plus member upgrade so I can sit with the kids and 200 or more for drinks n snacks for everyone and 2 beers for me. I can't afford to do that every 2 weeks. If it were cheaper I'd go every week
- Over the years I have gone from a full member to a 5 game member as the price is for a full membership is harder to justify particularly when you add on the cost of food and drinks at the venue
- Just wish some of the footy basics were cheaper. Should not cost upwards of \$100 for an individual person to buy a ticket, travel to and from the game and get some snacks and a drink
- Being a pensioner I can't afford to attend many games

Scheduling – Floating Fixture

- I'd like to plan where to go in advance and I don't know how to plan when I don't know when my team is playing
- Makes it too hard to organise interstate trips, means accommodation and flights more expensive. Also makes it too hard to plan other events. Need the full fixture so can put in leave from work early also
- Floating fixture has a major impact on fans and members ability to attend games across the country. People cannot plan ahead to get tickets, buy flights and accommodation to attend interstate matches. Airlines and Hospitality industry hike pricing up to rip fans off. People have no time to plan holidays and their schedules when the floating fixture is in place
- Not having the full fixture released in advance disadvantages those fans in regional and remote locations. It becomes more and more expensive to attend games without prior knowledge of the fixture
- Difficult to plan anything with the floating fixture
- Hard to plan the year and leave, flights etc
- The floating fixture shows a complete disregard and contempt for fans. If footy is a high priority for us, they expect us to put our lives on hold to work around when they deign to release the fixture to us. I now refuse to do this and will be missing home matches because I've had to make plans in advance of the fixture being released - we're talking things like baby showers, hens parties, 30th birthdays. You can't put your life on hold for footy, but it would be possible to work around the footy if we were given enough time to plan accordingly. Furthermore, it makes planning to attend interstate trips nearly impossible. Why should I have to wait until a month or two out from a match to book flights because I don't know if my team will be playing on the Friday night or Sunday twilight?
- The floating fixture is terrible for planning travel/leave
- Because I want to go to as many away games as I can, but I can't book travel in advance and it then costs me more which is not very fan friendly
- The floating fixture is just ridiculous absolutely no need for it at all. For people that want to attend games interstate like I do in round 16 you basically have to book to go Thursday to Monday to make sure you can attend the game is absolute crap

Grand Final Tickets

- The Grand Final is played between 2 Club Teams, not two corporate teams. The grand final tickets should be a 90 % allocation to competing club members. Corporate opposing teams, 10K is enough. Hence why the preliminary final sounds the best. Fact
- Being a Collingwood member you must have the top membership otherwise you will never get a ticket to the grand final
- AFL limits the number of club members and fans that can access the grand final. Too many tix for corporates
- Grand final should be a day of celebration for the competing teams and supporters, not a financial grab for the AFL
- Not enough tickets for loyal members. Too many tickets allocated to sponsors and others who never attend games during season and don't support competing teams
- I go to the footy every week. I am massively dedicated. I pay a lot of money and yet, for the Grand Final, non-supporters, corporates and VIPs seem to be prioritised. It's just wrong
- Unfair that those who pay for memberships year after year are restricted in being able to access Grand Final tickets, given the fact teams may only play finals very infrequently. AFL games should be for the fans and not for corporate
- I believe that all season ticket holders should have automatic access to a finals ticket until their team is either eliminated or plays in the grand final; it is a disgrace that the AFL do not allow all season ticket members access to finals tickets, at the same time given access to corporations or even worse selling Grand Final packages through their own ticketing agents for major profit.
- Only 17,000 tickets for each competing club is an ongoing disgrace. As is the lucky dip for who ends up getting them. It should be based on loyalty - who has supported their team throughout the season
- Being a passionate, paid up club member, it saddens me to see the AFL allocate so many tickets to non-paying club members on Grand Final day. You're a highly profitable, successful organisation. I understand the need to maximise revenue, however, you are completely missing the point. Without fans and paid-up club members, you do not have a competition. Yet, you turn your back on us, and the heartache of missing out on grand final tickets via the ballot system is gut-wrenching. Then, to see a game devoid of genuine atmosphere enjoyed by non-competing club members sickens and saddens me!! But this survey will not change anything; you simply don't get it

Victorian Centric

- The competition will never truly be even when it comes to Victorian teams due to travel, but some teams get an unrealistically favourable run due to their ability to pull a crowd ie Collingwood. This needs to be fairer
- Frankly it is frustrating when teams in Victoria get 18 games at the MCG and Marvel which is effectively 18 home games, and then they have the audacity to complain when the WA teams ask for less travel or no 5 day breaks after travel is ridiculous
- AFL buries their head in the sand and pretends the Victoria-centric nature of the league doesn't exist. Acknowledgement of this issue and some thought given to the fixture and the way they stage teams travel could go a long way towards reducing the burden on non-Victorian teams that Victorian teams simply don't face
- The media and AFL bias towards Victorian teams is extremely frustrating. Whilst I understand a lot of money comes from Victoria, if the AFL is truly serious about a national competition this will have to change. Vic bias is a real thing and millions of interstate fans all feel it. Broadcasters, AFL and the bigger clubs need to put their own selfish ambitions aside for the betterment of the game in years to come
- One rule for the Vics one for the rest of us
- Melbourne clubs have massive advantage with games at MCG and minimal travel
- My team travels interstate 11 times this year, some fixtures on a 6 day break
- From scheduling to umpiring to commentators to penalties, the Victorian teams get favoured time and time again
- It's the AFL in name only. It seems that all decisions made by the AFL is done for the benefit of 10 Vic teams. NGA academies Unequal Father Son rules Lopsided fixture Finals schedule including GF being always at the MCG are examples of favourable game changes and decisions in favour of Vic teams There never seems to be an intent to grow the game outside of Victoria
- We repeatedly see decision making and media coverage focussed on the benefit of Victorian clubs, to the detriment of the national competition. Fixturing which sees Victorian teams not leave the state for 15 weeks while non-Victorian teams travel every second week

Fan Behaviour

- The poor behaviour of some fans ruins the match day experience for a lot of people
- As I generally attend games with my child now, I choose not to attend away games, especially at night, as fans often are drunk and abusive. There needs to be more areas for family attendance, where alcohol is not served, rather than just one bay in the nosebleeds
- There are always a few annoying, scary, drunk people at the game
- It's really unpleasant to be in the stands surrounded by fans who use profanities, abuse umpires and players. I am uncomfortable to bring my children to a game because of that.
- Idiots after too much alcohol. More dry areas would be great for families. Fans that have to consume 4 beers (minimum purchase) become aggressive and very vocal during the game (language is foul and uncalled for). This has caused us to no longer be club members and no longer attend games
- Level of abuse fans dished out to umpires and opposition players has worsened considerably over the past 5 years. Foul language usually used. Even kids often mimicking their parents' behaviour and language
- As a cheer squad member we can be easy targets for rowdy behaviour by opposition supporters sometimes with foul language. Most times you don't know where it comes from but it is a concern because the louder we cheer the more it antagonises the opposition around us
- Abusive & obnoxious behaviour of a very small number of fans
- I find the increasing number of adults who yell abuse at players and umpires distressing. I would like to see the AFL run an education campaign on this issue. As long as this behavior is accepted as normal at AFL footy it flows on down to all other levels of football
- Fans are now more aggressive than any time I can remember

Ticketing

- Trying to buy tickets online, one game is hard enough, trying for 4 is impossible for an older
- Cause I struggle with technology, I wish I could walk up to the entrance and buy a ticket
- It is very difficult to access good quality reserved seats in the AFL members reserve for big matches
- Digital ticket scanning has lots of problems with entering grounds. Ticketmaster and Ticketek are difficult to use
- The ticketing sites are neither user friendly or cost effective. Given the recent debacle over Ticketmaster's site being hacked I am expecting further fallout from this gross mismanagement. Why we haven't got an Australian seat booking agency for the most frequented sport is beyond me
- Games always say sold out yet half seats are empty
- Both ticketing agencies Ticketek & Ticketmaster need to change their selling process. They are always shocked when their websites crash, but they continue to have games and finals all sold at the same time and on the same day. In this day and age where the majority of tickets are sold online, there is no need to have every game to start selling at the same time

Acknowledgements

The AFLFA extends its gratitude to all members and fans who participated in the survey. We also thank the Herald Sun and various AFL clubs for their support in distributing the survey. A special acknowledgement goes to Sheridan Verwey a dedicated member of the AFLFA committee, for her exceptional management of the survey.

Prepared on 9 July 2024

By the AFL Fans Association

