



**FOOTBALL VICTORIA**  
**DISABILITY**  
**FOOTBALL**  
**FRAMEWORK**





# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

**Football Victoria acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nation occupants of Australia and the Torres Strait and extend our acknowledgement to all First Nations peoples within the state of Victoria upon whose lands we play on.**

**We respectfully embrace their continued cultural and spiritual connection to Country and pay respect to all their ancestors. Football Victoria pledges commitment to all First Nations peoples of Victoria.**





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## DISABILITY FOOTBALL FRAMEWORK

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## CEO'S MESSAGE

Football Victoria is proud to introduce the Disability Football Framework, our commitment to ensuring football is accessible, welcoming, and inclusive for all Victorians. We believe every person should have the opportunity to take part in our game, and this Framework strengthens the foundations needed to make that a reality across clubs, communities, and pathways.

While we have made important progress, we know that true inclusion isn't achieved through standalone programs. It requires a coordinated approach across our entire football system, confident clubs, supported coaches, strong partnerships, and pathways that recognise and value players of all abilities. This Framework brings that focus, setting clear priorities, practical supports, and a shared direction for how disability football can continue to grow and thrive in Victoria.

This work aligns closely with the priorities in Football Victoria's Our Football 2024–2028 Strategic Framework, strengthening participation, supporting clubs, and building an inclusive football community. Our vision is for every player, regardless of ability, to feel welcomed, respected, and supported to reach their potential, and we remain committed to working alongside clubs, delivery providers, and communities to embed this inclusion into everyday practice.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to making football a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable environment for all. Together, we can continue to build a football landscape that is stronger, fairer, and truly for everyone.

### **Dan Birrell**

*Chief Executive Officer, Football Victoria*



## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Football has a unique ability to connect people, and that's something I've come to appreciate deeply in my role. Early in my experience for disability inclusion, while coaching, I would hear from families about their child's needs and often didn't know the best way to support them. Those moments made me realise how much I wanted to learn and grow in this area. What matters most is having the willingness to listen, to learn, and to continually strive to do better, and that mindset has guided me throughout my journey.

Since then, I've been incredibly proud of the growth of the All Abilities League and the way we've strengthened and formalised our disability football offerings. Our offerings are not a side project for Football Victoria, it's a core part of who we are, and something our community can genuinely be proud of.

This Disability Football Framework represents an important step forward in making our approach more intentional, consistent, and supportive. It provides clear guidance, practical tools, and a shared direction for everyone involved in disability football, clubs, coaches, volunteers, partners, and community members alike. Its purpose is to help create environments where people feel confident to deliver inclusive football experiences and where players of all abilities feel safe, welcomed, and valued.

Together, we can continue to build a football environment that is welcoming, empowering, and accessible, for every player, every club, and every community across Victoria.

### **Selin Arpaci**

*All Abilities & Inclusion Programs Coordinator*





# HISTORY

Football Victoria has a long-standing commitment to delivering inclusive football opportunities for people with disability. Our journey began in 1996 with the introduction of the wheelchair football program, and since then, our offerings have expanded significantly through new programs, partnerships, and accessible formats.





# CURRENT DISABILITY FOOTBALL OFFERINGS IN VICTORIA

Delivered by Football Victoria and partner organisations, the following programs and formats are currently available across the state:

- Cerebral Palsy Football
- All Abilities Football
- All Abilities Futsal
- Wheelchair Football
- Powerchair Football
- Blind and Partially Sighted Football
- Deaf Football
- Intellectual Disability Football

These offerings reflect the growing diversity of disability football in Victoria. In the future, we aim to broaden these formats further, ensuring more players can access football in ways that meet their needs, interests, and ambitions.

**Football Victoria remains committed to breaking down participation barriers, empowering players, and continually improving the experience of disability football across the state.**







# CHALLENGES

Despite growing interest and momentum, significant challenges continue to limit participation and progression for people with disability in football, and understanding these barriers has been critical in shaping the direction and priorities of this Framework.

## **AWARENESS & VISIBILITY:**

- Low awareness of available programs due to limited promotion and representation.
- Unclear participation pathways for families and stakeholders.

## **RESOURCES & SUPPORT:**

- Clubs often unsure where to start, with limited awareness and education.
- Limited available resources are frequently inaccessible or not tailored to the specific needs of disability football.

## **CONFIDENCE & CAPABILITY:**

- Clubs lack confidence in delivering safe, inclusive programs.
- Volunteers and coaches often under prepared or unsupported.
- Mainstream football systems may not fully understand disability inclusion.

## **PATHWAYS & PROGRESSION:**

- Lack of visible or structured development pathways.
- Few connections between grassroots and elite levels.
- Talent identification processes are limited or unclear.





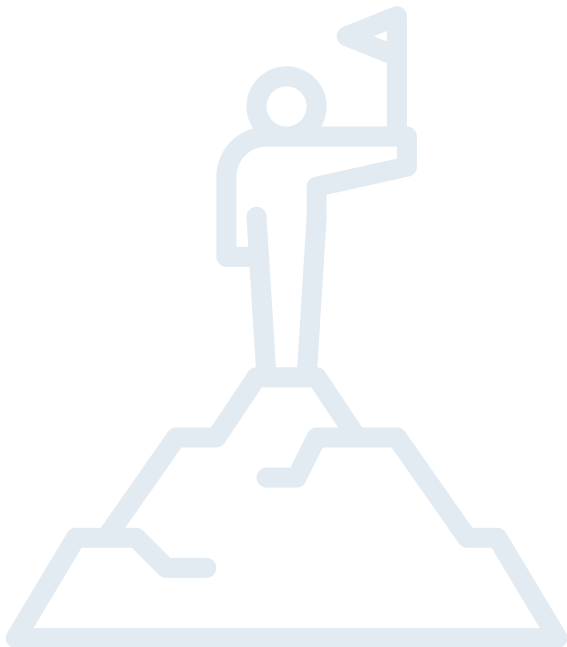
# CHALLENGES

## INCONSISTENCY & RISK:

- Program quality and safety varies greatly.
- Delivery often depends on one passionate individual.

## SYSTEMIC BARRIERS & SUSTAINABILITY:

- Disability football is not always prioritised.
- Long-term sustainability challenged by funding and staff and volunteer turnover.
- Ad hoc delivery with no overarching framework.





# DISABILITY FOOTBALL FRAMEWORK

## VISION

Equitable and inclusive football for people with disability, for every club, in every format, everywhere.

## PURPOSE

To equip clubs in delivering inclusive disability football by raising awareness, building capability, strengthening player pathways, and providing resources.



## STAKEHOLDERS

- **Football Victoria:** Strategy, coordination, club support, and resource development
- **Clubs:** Local delivery, relationship-building, and inclusive culture
- **Participants & Families:** Lived experience, community connection, and consultation
- **Disability Organisations and Health Professionals:** Partnerships, building relationships, and outreach
- **Councils, Schools & Community Groups:** Engagement, promotion, and connection
- **Disability Sport Providers:** Program delivery, specialist expertise, and partnerships





# DISABILITY FOOTBALL FRAMEWORK

## STRATEGIC PILLARS

### NETWORK

### QUALITY

### VISIBILITY

### OPPORTUNITY

### CLUB CAPABILITY

### PATHWAYS

## OBJECTIVES

Build a connected and centralised network of disability football programs to enhance visibility, coordination, and shared learning.

Establish consistent standards and safe practices to ensure high-quality and aligned delivery of disability football across Victoria.

Raise awareness of disability football and its value by amplifying visibility through storytelling, branding, and clear communications.

Ensure that players with disability can access inclusive football opportunities close to home, across all regions of Victoria.

Provide clubs with education, resources, and guidance they need to confidently deliver sustainable and inclusive football programs.

Create clear and supported progression pathways for players with disability, from community participation to elite.



## ACTIONS

### NETWORK

- Develop a centralised directory of disability football programs.
- Create a statewide club contact list.
- Host three networking sessions annually for clubs and partners.
- Promote case studies and peer-to-peer learning.
- Establish channels for ongoing feedback and collaboration.

### QUALITY

- Define minimum standards, safe practice guidelines, and program delivery expectations.
- Mandatory registration for all participants in disability football programs.
- Conduct occasional reviews to ensure program alignment with standards.

### VISIBILITY

- Launch a digital and social media campaign showcasing participants and programs.
- Create a consistent brand and visual identity for disability football programs.
- Feature disability football stories in FV communications and newsletters.
- Promote disability football offerings to stakeholders.





## ACTIONS

### OPPORTUNITY

- Map current program locations and identify priority areas.
- Liaise with councils and schools to activate new disability football offerings.
- Provide guidance for flexible and low-barrier participation options.

### CLUB CAPABILITY

- Create resources and templates for clubs facilitating a disability football program.
- Offer inclusion training for clubs and coaches.
- Provide support in program development and connection to wider opportunities.

### PLAYER PATHWAYS

- Develop a clear player pathway structure across all formats.
- Enhance the identification and development of elite player talent.
- Support coaches to more effectively identify emerging talent and guide their growth.



## ENABLERS AND SUPPORTS

- Dedicated staff within Football Victoria to lead and coordinate delivery.
- Partnerships with disability organisations, health professionals, councils, schools and community groups.
- Resource hub with educational resources, program-development guidance and templates.
- Strong networks that enable collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Collaboration with key organisations for community engagement, funding, and promotion.



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Track number of active programs, participation growth, and retention.
- Gather feedback from clubs to assess capability and satisfaction.
- Capture participant experiences, including stories and case studies, to provide qualitative insight.
- Review and update the framework every 2 years.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- Broader access to disability football programs across Victoria.
- Clubs are confident and equipped to deliver safe, inclusive programs.
- Clear pathways exist for players with disability to grow and compete.
- Increased visibility and community recognition of disability football.
- A connected and sustainable ecosystem supporting inclusion in football.









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