

The AFL confirms that it ended the employment of a junior staffer who started with the organisation after a month due to serious concerns regarding her conduct.

The AFL found that the employee had engaged in conduct that constituted multiple breaches of AFL policy and during her short period of time with the organisation, had on numerous occasions, misrepresented her role, her responsibilities and her authority to both internal and external stakeholders.

While the employee had only been with the AFL for a number of weeks, the seriousness of the breaches were of a nature that it was not possible for the employee to continue to work within the organisation.

The AFL takes very seriously its responsibility to provide a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff members, but it also takes seriously each employee's right to privacy and right to their personal information not being shared without their permission.

The AFL also takes very seriously any information of harassment, inappropriate behaviour or concerns about the safety of women and girls in football and has invested considerable resource and investment in responding to issues raised in the Women and Girls in Umpiring Report that was commissioned by the AFL in 2020.

The AFL also reiterates that it strongly and actively encourages an open and transparent culture of raising concerns and team members can raise concerns internally or via our portal. To assert this staff member was terminated for raising concerns is absolutely incorrect.

The AFL will continue to offer support services to the former junior staffer.

The AFL also wrote to community umpires before the start of the season advising of the process for reporting any issues at any level of the game as well as providing an update on the actions taken at both the elite and community level since the completion of the Women and Girls in Umpiring Report.

The AFL also appointed a Leadership Advisory Group to provide guidance and assist the AFL to deliver on the outcomes set in the [Women and Girls Game Development Action Plan](#), to create equal opportunities for women to play, coach, umpire, officiate, administer, and govern the game.

The group is focusing on the actions as they relate to leadership roles for women in Community Football, a key area of the Women and Girls Action plan, and will help to deliver the AFL Women's Football Vision to strive for equal participation and representation by the end of this decade.

The Leadership Advisory Group is co-chaired by AFLW pioneer and women's sport advocate **Professor Susan Alberti AC** and **AFL EGM Game Development Rob Auld** and comprises of:

- **Professor Susan Alberti AC (Co-Chair)**
- **Rob Auld (Co-chair)** – AFL EGM Game Development
- **Amber Banfield** – WAFC Board Member (WA)
- **Tamara Bardon** - Head of HR, BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (QLD)
- **Kerrie Brewer** – Hawthorn EGM Development, Infrastructure, and Gov Relations (VIC)
- **Helen Langenberg** - Tasmania's Department of State Growth, Sport and Rec (TAS)
- **Megan McDonald** – Geelong Cats AFLW Captain (VIC)
- **Helen Ockerby** - Executive director WA Country Football League. Chair of the Kimberley Football Advisory Group (WA)
- **Rebecca Randazzo** - Head Coach QAFLW Coorparoo FC (QLD)
- **Ben Scales** - CEO Mid Murray Council (SA)
- **Kerry Turner** - NSW Office of Sport, Participation and Partnerships (NSW)

Other actions taken as a result of the AFL commissioning of the Women and Girls in Umpiring Report include:

**At Community level**

- We are pleased to advise that we are close to appointing Umpire Recruitment and Retention Leads in every State.
- Continued development of a National Accreditation Framework for all umpires.
- Kicked off training to support facilitators for in-school introduction to umpiring program.
- The AFL has appointed dedicated Women & Girls Roles in each State who are responsible for the delivery of the **AFL's Women and Girls Action Plan** which includes increasing female umpiring numbers and improving umpire association environments including appointment of female umpire coaches.
- This is supported by the appointment of **Australian Football Hall of Famer Debbie Lee** to the role of National Women and Girls Action Plan Lead to help drive the implementation of the Women and Girls Action Plan, including supporting more women and girls into umpiring and working to ensure umpire associations and clubs provide a safe physical and cultural environment.
- Increased our investment and resources around community umpiring by appointing Umpire Recruitment, Retention and Development Leads in each States allowing a significantly greater focus on the experiences of community umpires and how we can support community leagues and clubs to recruit, retain and develop umpires nationally.
- Increased focus on inclusive environments by piloting in 2023 Inclusive Club training for just over 10% of our Umpire associations with a view to rolling out to all Umpiring clubs.
- Continuation of our National female umpiring mentoring program – currently over 150 women invited to be a part of this program.
- Inclusion and diversity training module developed and launched on the AFL's Online Learning System for those involved in umpiring.
- Increased investment of \$400,000 dedicated annually over three years to the development of umpire coaches including increasing their skills and ability to create safe and inclusive environments in umpiring clubs.
- Facility investment resulting in there now being gender neutral umpire changerooms at 52% of facilities, up from 39% in 2017.
- Inclusive Umpire Rooms guidelines and Posters released in 2022 to support and educate on fair and inclusive use of shared spaces.
- The number of women and girls umpiring has increased by 7%, with current registrations 6% up compared to this time last year.
- Umpire Coaches to again be included in the 2023 National She Can Coach program.
- For all community umpiring an integrity reporting portal is available - this is publicized through Play.AFL, Club help, Coach LMS, National Community Policy Handbook
- Commencement of national umpires survey in 2022 with exit reason question.

- Included welcoming environment in national umpires survey questionnaire.
- Mental Health Strategy for 2024 in development with specific focus and action plan for community umpiring.

### **Elite and Talent Pathway**

- **Lisa Lawry appointed as General Manager Umpiring.** Lisa was previously General Manager of People at Essendon Football Club and has a long history of driving cultural change and opportunities for women.
- Conducted a survey for all State League Umpires to understand personal experiences to help inform our action plan in supporting all State League Umpires and in particular female umpires.
- Conducted the first of a series of facilitated training sessions regarding respectful relationships for all State League Umpires.
- Recruited new female liaison officer position to support State League & Pathways female umpires.
- To improve the safety of all State League Umpires, the AFL has ensured that AFL Security & Integrity Officers are present at all VFL, VFLW games and targeted Coates Boys & Girls games to provide support to umpires & other match day officials.
- Invested in seven new roles to support the recruitment, development and retention of female umpires in our elite umpiring pathway.
- Facilitated Female Umpiring Talent Day Pilot, which was attended by 75 community umpires from Victoria, which identified 8 new high potential female umpires.
- Completed Pre-Season Female Academy Program with 17 high potential female umpires from Victoria (which included the 8 female umpires identified at the Female Talent Day).
- As a result of the dedicated AFL support, 47% of the Pre-Season Female Academy Program were promoted to the AFL's State League & Pathways Program in 2023.
- More female umpires were selected for AFLW Season 7 (**S7**) panel (63% increase on Season 6), with 46% of goal umpires being female.
- As a result of the increase in female representation, more female umpires were selected for AFLW S7 finals (8% increase), with 50/50 representation in grand final selection for goal umpires.
- Have now developed a new umpiring talent framework which is a world leading initiative for officiating. The framework sets out the skills, capabilities, attributes, and experience that an umpire needs at each stage of their development