

# **A REVIEW OF COUNTRY CRICKET IN VICTORIA 2014/15**

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# 1. Introduction

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In late October 2014, the Board of Cricket Victoria commissioned an independent Review of the state of cricket in Country Victoria. The Terms of Reference for this Review are:

- (i) Assess the current state of play in country cricket inclusive of participation in general, production of male and female cricketers for State and National representation, leadership and control / authority of country cricket and current resourcing support (and the subsequent return on investment) provided to these areas from the national and state bodies.
- (ii) Examine the governance and structures impacting country cricket inclusive of Cricket Australia (CA), Cricket Victoria (CV), the current affiliate body the Victorian Country Cricket League (VCCL), the role of the existing eight (8) Region Boards and the Associations.
- (iii) Where appropriate and applicable provide recommendations relating to the overall strategy for country cricket in Victoria, including governance, overall structure and resourcing support from CA and CV.

This Review started from only one premise – the heart of our game is the Club. Market development programs create interest with the aim of young players flowing into under-age cricket, the better players being identified and nurtured through the Pathways programs, and senior cricket flourishing over time from the influx of numbers. The basic model is sound but there are many challenges impacting the future.

## 2. Executive Summary

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Cricket at grass-roots level remains a game played for competitive and social reasons in Clubs run by volunteer administrators. Today, there are many more people than previously employed by CA & CV in the management of cricket, but the game in Country Victoria relies heavily on people willing to give of their time to run Clubs, Associations, Regions and the VCCL. Their skills, passion and commitment underpin Country cricket today and will so far into the future.

While cricket in Country Victoria remains generally healthy and the dominant summer sport, there are signs of stress and areas of decline which need attention now:

- Governance of Country cricket needs streamlining and alignment with the principles of the **Crawford-Carter** governance review.
- Many administrative tasks in Association management can be delegated to paid part-time staff leaving volunteer administrators to focus primarily on Club responsibilities.
- Additional resources are required to ensure Regional Cricket Managers (RCMs) can better meet growing market and game development targets set as part of the national strategy.
- The roles of CA & CV in relation to Country cricket need clarification and steps taken to improve two-way communication with the grass-roots of the game.
- Relationships with Local Government Authorities (LGAs) must be strengthened to minimise the risk to cricket facilities and their availability throughout the full summer.

All of these issues and others became apparent from meetings and discussions with stakeholders across Country Victoria and are reflected in a package of specific recommendations arising from this Review.

Country cricket is eagerly looking to CV for decisive leadership and an integrated approach to meeting these challenges through enhanced resourcing of the game.

### 3. Methodology

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From early discussions, it was evident that maximum value would be achieved from holding face-to-face meetings in each of the country Regions. Many people attending these meetings travelled considerable distances and also devoted time to ensuring the issues facing the game in their local areas were thoughtfully and thoroughly presented. The opportunity for senior local cricket administrators to meet with a representative of Cricket Victoria was appreciated and their input and insights have been of considerable value to this Review.

A schedule of these meetings is attached (refer Attachment 1). At each country venue, media interviews were conducted – a file of media coverage generated is held at CV.

All cricket Associations were invited to make a direct written or verbal submission although few did so.

Similarly, submissions were invited from the cricket public and a number were received.

Meetings were also held with other key stakeholders – CA and CV senior management and staff, the VCCL Board and senior office-bearers, ball manufacturers – as well as individuals in Clubs, Associations and schools.

## 4. Current Position

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Historically, cricket's growth in Australia created a bottom-up organisational structure, in that players formed Clubs, then Associations and over time, regional, State and national bodies were created. Since the mid-1980's when the then Australian Cricket Board established Kanga Cricket and took over Under 19 and Under 16 national cricket, Cricket Australia's responsibilities and sphere of influence have grown steadily beyond the management of International and Interstate cricket.

Cricket has transformed into a significant commercial enterprise, with CA the financial hub of the sport nationally. The 2011 **Crawford-Carter** governance review has produced a new governance structure for CA better suited to the management of cricket nationally. A CA Strategic Plan dealing with the growth of cricket at all levels across Australia is in place.

As with CA, there have been substantial changes to the governance of Cricket Victoria. Their current Strategic Plan dovetails with the national plan and provides a clear vision for cricket's development across the State.

The Victorian Country Cricket League was formed in 1926 to provide an over-arching body to promote cricket outside the metropolitan area. Today, it is managed through quarterly meetings by a Board of 5 office-bearers and a representative from each of 8 Regional Boards, with a part-time Administration Manager.

The Regional Boards are themselves comprised of representatives of the various affiliated cricket Associations in these areas.

There are currently 52 Associations and 587 Clubs in Country Victoria.

The number of players as a percentage of population is higher in most Country Regions compared to metropolitan Melbourne.

Cricket is facing increasing competitive pressure from other sports, notably Australian Rules football (in terms of pre-season training demanding participation by talented young people, many of whom would otherwise play cricket), basketball and soccer.

There is also pressure on the use of facilities with the potential for cricket to lose some existing grounds and for cricket's needs not to be adequately met in the development of new residential areas.

## 5. Participation

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Reviewing the annual census statistics for 2014/15 shows little change compared to 2013/14 in the number of country Associations, Clubs or players (refer Attachment 2). However, closer examination identifies changes in the number of teams which correlates with information provided in the local area meetings held during the Review (refer Attachment 3).

Key challenges facing the future of Country cricket are:

- playing numbers, especially in smaller towns
- playing standards and the need for more coaches
- the cost and uptake of market development programs (MILO In2CRICKET & T20 BLAST)
- player transition from these programs to Club under-age cricket, and from under-age to senior cricket
- number and standard of umpires
- number of administrators
- the impact of other sports and competition for grounds
- communications
- financial, especially the impact of distance and the cost of travel

### 5.1 PLAYING NUMBERS

Smaller towns across the State have been impacted over time by:

- the movement of young people leaving for higher education and/or employment, many who do not return
- consolidation of small farms into larger ones reducing the number of families in those areas

These factors are beyond the control of cricket but help to explain the reduction in the number of smaller Clubs and the consolidation of Associations over the past generation.

More generally, other factors are at play:

- local employment opportunities through extended hours trading drawing young people away from sport
- reduction in the number and size of enterprises (banks, schools, government agencies, etc) located in country towns which used to be a source of senior cricketers transferred to the country in their employment
- increasing sport and leisure choices
- some families wanting to have their weekends free from competitive sport
- in many areas today, under-age players are also playing senior cricket to make up team numbers
- some players do not wish to make a commitment to two-day cricket, while others are looking for a short-term involvement of weeks, rather than the whole season

Associations have responded to these changing circumstances by rescheduling some under-age competitions to week-nights or in a limited number of cases, to Sundays and creating mid-week 20:20 competitions.

Senior cricket formats in some areas have moved to one-day matches only, although as expected such a move provokes considerable debate. Of concern is the number of reported forfeits where some Clubs have real trouble fielding their lowest eleven at times of the season.

There is an on-going tension between those players who want to play two-day cricket across the season and the need to keep Clubs alive by catering to those who can't or won't make a week by week commitment.

The collection and analysis of data on playing numbers is vastly improved on previous eras. But of necessity, certain assumptions have to be made which can disguise the actual position. Providing the assumptions are maintained, year to year comparisons remain largely valid.

## 5.2 PLAYING STANDARDS

Although no generalisation can be made, there is sufficient concern in a number of areas that playing standards of young cricketers need to be improved. Cricket is a difficult and complex game to learn and young players need coaching to develop technique which will allow them to be competitive in senior cricket. Being uncompetitive leads to lack of success, lack of enjoyment and withdrawal.

The absence of senior players to manage/coach under-age teams and insufficient coaches generally is an area requiring attention.

Country cricket has been a wonderful source of Australian, Victorian and Premier cricket players for a long time. Without decisive action to improve playing standards at Club cricket, the future stream of elite players cannot be guaranteed.

## 5.3 MILO IN2CRICKET & T20 BLAST

There are four issues here to consider:

- (i) **Cost** – for most parents, cost is not a deterrent. But some Clubs choose to run a similar program without Milo branded material as a means of keeping costs down while still using the program to stimulate interest. For others, running their own program is used as a Club fund-raiser.

There is a case for the management of both programs to be more decentralised, with a greater proportion of the fee charged to be retained by Clubs. The outcome is likely to be greater buy-in by Clubs and elimination of non-branded material with consequent enhanced benefit to the national sponsor. This concept warrants further study by CA/CV management with direct input by RCMs.

- (ii) **Duplication of promotional material** – for families with a number of children and/or those who participate in more than one year, there is a duplication of similar promotional material provided. This raises the question in parents' minds of waste and over-pricing. The study should also address where cost savings could be achieved without diluting the benefits.



- (iii) **Expectations** – the objective of providing every boy and girl with a positive introduction to our national game is highly laudable. Naturally, there will be a drop-off in participation rates as some children find other interests, but ideally as they grow up, they will remain favourably disposed to cricket, whether as a player, Club volunteer, umpire, spectator, television viewer or future parent.

The environment created by these programs is one of active participation, colour, excitement, fun and short-duration. Contrast that to under-age hard-ball cricket where the playing experience as one gets older can be quite different. Most under 12 and many under 14 competitions have rules designed to give every player active participation. A few Associations reported that in order to retain playing numbers at under 16 level, they still need to play under mass participation style rules. The consequence is that players are not learning how to play a long innings or bowl long spells and when they graduate to senior cricket, lacking the skills to compete, they are not successful and drop out forever.

- (iv) **Cricket for females** - a further area of concern is the widespread lack of opportunity in country areas for girls to move into Club cricket. The number of female cricketers in country areas is around 3.5% of the total male playing number.

Yet the success of the Australian women's cricket team, the arrival of a women's Big Bash League and the media coverage given to both will create a demand from girls and women to play Club cricket. Closing that gap needs to be a priority both in CV strategic planning and for Country Clubs.

## 5.4 TRANSITIONAL ISSUES

There are two moments in time where playing numbers drop-off - from school to Club cricket and from under-age to senior cricket.

Managing that transition into under-age cricket, and managing expectations especially for today's young generation, is a real challenge. Best practice observed in the Review is where an Association mandates its Clubs to have nominated members liaise directly with local schools to ensure young players are made welcome as they move into Club cricket. But this is a numbers game and many Clubs lack volunteers to fill this role.

Building a stronger link between those who conduct such programs (especially in schools) and Clubs is necessary to avoid a drop-off in numbers and to fully capitalise on the considerable resource devoted to these programs

There are many reasons why under-age cricketers don't continue playing. A number (employment, other life-style interests, education, and so on) are beyond cricket's control. But cricket can provide better coaching to raise standards to allow younger players to compete in senior cricket; they can educate Clubs to make young players more welcome and have them become involved on and off the field.

A number of country areas report a missing age group in their playing mix, that being those in their early 20s to early 30s. Quite often, people move away to pursue education or employment and don't return. Thus senior teams comprise older players and those graduating from under-age cricket. Balancing the needs of both groups and developing productive communication and understanding is a real skill. Failure to do so leads to a drop-

off of young people. If not corrected, as the older group get to playing retirement age, teams and Clubs fold. Again, CV management needs to address this in their forward planning.

## **5.5 UMPIRING**

Few things make a game less enjoyable than the absence of independent, capable umpires. No Association reported they had sufficient umpires; most are desperate for numbers and looking ahead they see few replacements for those umpires who are reaching retirement.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on recruitment. Current umpires' fee levels of \$110-\$130 should be attractive for young people looking for a part-time income.

Most Associations have some form of umpires committee or association. Those that don't should be required to establish a formal relationship with their umpires' group. Every Association should appoint a senior member who is tasked with the portfolio of "Umpires Director" and a proper two-way communication process be established.

The program of country lectures conducted by CV needs to be continued and expanded.

## **5.6 MANAGEMENT**

Cricket in Country Victoria is very much a game run by volunteers, contributions coming at each of Club, Association and Regional Board levels. Often it is the same small group of dedicated volunteers who find the time to contribute at more than one level. The game and all who play it, are indebted to these men and women.

Of real concern is that this pool of volunteers, on the whole, is diminishing in numbers and ageing. Projecting ahead 5 years, only a minority of those asked at the various meetings could see themselves still being involved then.

The game is managed very much along traditional, some might say old-fashioned, lines of committee and delegates meetings. While there is a social element to these gatherings which has a degree of importance, many of those involved (especially those who are retired) expressed concern about the lack of interest and/or availability of the younger generation.

The relevance and need for many of these meetings, especially at Region level, and even the VCCL as a body itself, was often challenged.

Without enthusiastic and capable volunteers running Club cricket, the game will not prosper and – as has been seen – there is a risk of some Clubs winding-up.

The most urgent priority for CV coming from this Review is to resource the streamlining of Association and Region management. Many administrative tasks can be centralised and handled by paid part-time staff without depriving Clubs of the right to determine policies which are appropriate to the localised needs of their competitions (refer following section on governance). Such an initiative would free many volunteers to focus their time and energy on Club cricket.

Cricket invests heavily in Pathways programs for the talented young players. There are resources on MyCricket to assist administrators, but it is time to place greater emphasis on a Pathways program to develop and train Club administrators.

The Review encountered isolated examples of Clubs using best practice. Two examples are worth repeating here. The first relates to using modern technology to manage their operations. One Club reasoned that all players have, or have access to, a smart phone; all communications (team selections, results, photos, social messages and financial transactions) are done electronically. A younger group of tech-savvy members have been enrolled to assist the committee.

The other example relates to involvement of Club members. All tasks involved in running the Club across the season are identified and each member is invited to take on one or more tasks to share the load. Too often younger members are deterred from involvement by seeing too few in the Club doing too much and concluding they don't have the time to contribute.

The end result in both cases is a high level of member engagement and very efficient Clubs.

There doesn't appear to be a platform where best practices can be shared and Clubs can learn from one another. RCMs have a role to play here in sharing and disseminating best practice across the State.

## **5.7 REGIONAL CRICKET MANAGERS (RCMs)**

To a person they are highly valued by those with whom they work in their local areas. Strong and effective relationships have been built over time by them within their local areas. Their knowledge, experience and dedication are important assets to CV, and their value to the game's future cannot be under-estimated.

The role and workload of a RCM has changed and grown over time. Today, more time is spent on administration and management of casuals to the detriment of the hands-on development responsibility.

Theirs is not a "9 to 5" job, given much of their interaction is with volunteers after normal business hours or at weekends. That needs to be reflected better in their conditions of employment.

In a business sense, the RCMs are cricket's Sales Managers. The extent to which they successfully present the development programs to young people and their parents has a major impact on the achievement of the key strategic objective of making cricket accessible to all Australians.

Today's operational budgets are inadequate to meet this need. An additional \$50k per Region would enable the engagement of more part-time and casual development staff plus part-time administration assistance. In this latter regard, administrative support would be provided to Associations, freeing volunteers to focus on Club cricket.

## **5.8 COMPETITION FROM OTHER SPORTS**

The days of cricket in summer, footy in winter are long gone. There is ample evidence across the State of talented young people having to choose Australian Rules over cricket because of the requirement to be involved in pre-season training, which often starts in late November/early December.

The lure of being paid to play country football with the hope of being drafted into the funnel leading to an AFL career is strong. It is understandable why many multi-talented young players make this choice. Only the very best who are confident of their future in football, can afford to resist the pressure from football administrators and their peer group and play cricket. Even then, they are often required to play pre-season practice matches which clash with cricket finals.

One suggested solution propounded by a small minority was that cricketers should also be paid to play senior Club cricket. This notion is categorically rejected. The game cannot afford to make these payments; there would be little, if any, change to existing standards; and it is likely very few talented players would be drawn to cricket over football. CV needs to ensure that all competitions played under its auspices have a clear policy of payments being only made to the Captain/Coach and possibly one overseas player. Provision of funding and other benefits by CV needs to be conditional on this requirement and should be enshrined in appropriate service agreements.

While the Minister of Lands Determination defining the cricket and football seasons remains in force, too often it is honoured in the breach. Clubs and Associations need greater support from CV with LGAs to ensure the division of seasons is respected and cricket grounds are available for finals matches.

Finally on football, there is anecdotal evidence of the benefits of football and netball joining forces. Cricket should explore a similar strategic relationship with tennis. Lessons can be learnt from the way tennis negotiates with local Councils to sponsor events in rural areas.

In regard to other sports, both basketball and soccer are expanding and have very clear strategic objectives. Cricket grounds left unused on Sundays are at risk of being allocated by Councils to soccer. The particular risk is to turf wickets which may be damaged by other sports' use or worse, removed altogether. There is plenty of scope to develop girls/womens competitions on Sundays.

## **5.9 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES (LGAs)**

Two of the most useful meetings held in this Review were with representatives of LGAs. Common issues raised were – the cost of maintaining turf wickets; matching Club aspirations to move to turf cricket with their local Council's capacity to fund installation; pressure on Councils for multi-use of existing grounds; demand from other sports for access to cricket grounds e.g. on Sundays; other sports are presenting their strategic vision better than cricket has.

As the management of cricket at CA & CV levels has become more professionalised, so too has sport and recreation management in the Councils, especially post the amalgamation of local government entities.

CV currently retains consultants in this important area and it is essential that CV remains vigilant and develops close working relationships with LGA professionals who are looked to by Councils and their CEOs for their expertise and input.

## 5.10 PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

The time available for this Review did not allow a review of the various Pathways programs. However, a frequent comment encountered in the more remote areas of the State was the cost and time involved in parents having to take young players to Melbourne for training/camps/events. Their solution was to regionalise some of these. CV management should give this active and on-going consideration.

## 5.11 OTHER MATTERS

- **Premier Round** – if the objective is to take top players to the country to promote interest, it is not working. Where local Club cricket is cancelled so that players can attend, in many parts of the State they prefer to have a weekend away. The timing of the round is also important with early season matches especially in southern areas not allowing local curators to produce their best pitches. Work is needed to achieve better outcomes. However, the visits of Premier Clubs for pre-season, particularly in the warmer northern areas, is highly valued.
- **Elite Matches** – country cricket accepts that with the congestion of the International program, there is little chance of attracting visiting teams or the Victorian team to play. However, the Australian Cricketers Association does conduct matches involving former players. CV management should continue working with the ACA to schedule a series of matches across the State and to draw on these former players to run coaching clinics and undertake other promotional work when making country visits. The benchmark in this regard is set in Queensland and their approach should be reviewed and emulated.

## 6. Governance

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### 6.1 CA/CV

The scope of this Review does not extend to a detailed examination of the relationship between CA & CV. Clearly, CA has a desire and need to ensure there is a national approach to game and market development and there appears to be ample opportunity for CV to participate in the policy decision-making processes affecting cricket at grass-roots level.

However, there were occasions observed during the Review period where there was some degree of disconnect and confusion between the actions of CA and CV in communications with Country cricket.

Rightly or wrongly, there is a perception that the management of game development is top-heavy within CA & CV, and in both cases Melbourne-centric. Whether this perception is accurate could not be assessed. Nonetheless, a lean management structure with maximum resources applied to the base of the pyramid i.e. Club cricket, is the best way to achieve strategic objectives relating to participation.

To the extent that the roles of CA and CV in regard to game and market development are not absolutely clear (and they don't appear to be), there would be benefit in both parties meeting to clarify roles and responsibilities and communicating the outcomes. This would enhance operational efficiencies and local buy-in.

### 6.2 CV

Currently, Country cricket has a (VCCL) delegate voice at the Parliament (Association) but not at Cabinet (Board). While the VCCL aspires to a direct position on the CV Board, this is not appropriate under the modern governance structure now in place.

Nonetheless, it is very important for Country cricket to be heard, to have the differences between metropolitan and Country cricket taken into consideration in formulating policies and establishing budgets. In the allocation of portfolios among CV Directors, one Director should be assigned responsibility for Country cricket.

Further, to demonstrate that the Board governs for all of Victoria, at least one Board meeting should be held in Country Victoria, the venue rotating throughout the State so that over time the CV Board visits each of the key centres (see 6.3 below). Aside from the normal business agenda, there is much to be gained from meetings with Zone Boards and local Associations, LGA representatives and other stakeholder groups over a 2 day period.

### 6.3 VCCL

The stated purposes of the Victorian Country Cricket League are to:

- promote, advance, control, manage and foster the game of cricket throughout Country Victoria
- control and manage national, regional and other representative cricket matches throughout Country Victoria

- control and manage, either solely, or in conjunction with other cricketing bodies, visits of cricket teams to or from Country Victoria
- promote, foster and preserve the best interests and traditions of the game of cricket
- encourage cooperation between Members of the League
- engage in such other activities, whether of a like nature or not which maybe for the time being be permitted by law and determined by the League

Throughout its long history, the VCCL has been the voice of Country cricket through it having a voting delegate to Cricket Victoria meetings. It has successfully advocated for a number of initiatives, notably the employment of Regional Cricket Managers, expansion of the Premier round and the national insurance plan; has been supportive of the roll-out of MyCricket and many other CA & CV policies; has established the Under 21 regional competition to complement the CV Pathways program; and managed Country Week and the Victorian team in the Australian Country Championships as well as performing other administrative functions.

The individuals who make up today's VCCL have each given lengthy and invaluable voluntary service to cricket and their experience and knowledge is a resource to be respected and retained where possible as the game moves forward.

Today, the role of the VCCL has changed in many respects. Country Week numbers continue to diminish (down to 3 divisions in 2015). CV drives the talent identification process through the RCMs. Funding is provided by CV for a part-time Administration Manager. VCCL statistics show a decline in the number of senior teams over the past 3 years of 3.43% although the number of Clubs is relatively static.

The CV Strategic Plan, which reflects the strategic direction for cricket in Australia as set out by CA, has good governance as a key part of one of its pillars. There have been major changes to the composition of the CA Board which flowed from the **Crawford-Carter** report. The key principles of the governance review - an emphasis on a skills-based, smaller Board, removal of conflicts of interest, partnership with management, clarity of roles (Board focusing on policy, management implementing) – apply now at CV, are mooted in the current Metropolitan cricket review and have application in Country cricket.

This is especially so as Country cricket gears for increased competition from other sports and responds to societal and internal changes. Also, a diminishing number of people have the time to serve the game at multiple levels of administration.

The governance structure of Country cricket can, and needs to, be modernised and significant additional resources must be provided to streamline the management of Associations.

It is proposed that the VCCL be wound up (see transitional arrangements) and Country cricket be re-organised as set out below.

## 6.4 ZONE BOARDS

- The eight existing Regions to remain.
- 5 Zone Boards be established:
  - **Southwest**, based in Geelong – encompassing Barwon Region (and probably part of Western Country which is geographically too large)
  - **Western**, based in Ballarat – encompassing Central Highlands and Western Country Regions
  - **North Western**, based in Bendigo – encompassing Northern Rivers and Mallee Murray Regions
  - **North East**, based in Wodonga – encompassing the North East Country Region, possibly part of Northern Rivers, and subject to discussions with CA and Cricket NSW, part of the Riverina
  - **Eastern**, based in Traralgon – encompassing the Gippsland and South East Country Regions
- Each Zone Board to be an incorporated entity.
- The stakeholders of each Board to be the cricket Associations in the Region/s making up the Zone.
- A Board of Directors of 6 people be elected and the Board to appoint a further 3 directors to complement the skills mix of the elected directors.
- It is equally important to have an elected Board comprised of people with senior cricket administration experience and from different areas of each Zone (each person would have to resign from any current cricket position) and those from outside the structure of the game who have skills and passion for cricket.
- Directors would serve a three-year term and be capable of re-election. At establishment of the new Board, the terms would be staggered so that two elected directors and one appointed director would serve for one year, a second group for two years and a third group for three years.
- Once the Board is fully constituted, the directors would elect one of their number as Chairman.
- The need for Regional Boards would diminish but not so the requirement for local needs-based decision-making. By the 2016/17 season, the Regional Boards should be dissolved as formal entities and each Zone Board would decide what local committee structure is appropriate to meet local needs.
- An Executive Officer (see below) to be appointed by the Board and responsible for the implementation of Board approved policy.
- The 5 Zone Chairmen would meet periodically with the CV director responsible for Country cricket to ensure policy relating to Country cricket is consistent across the State and blends with the game's overall strategic direction.
- CV to provide funding of \$120,000 per Zone annually (to be reviewed annually in terms of any increase) and a service agreement be established between CV and each Zone covering this funding.



## **6.5 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

This is a leadership role encompassing:

- creation of policies for Zone Board approval and then implementation
- development of a Zone business plan inter-linked with the CA & CV Strategic Plans
- negotiation with Local Government Authorities to guarantee cricket facilities
- liaison with all key stakeholders – cricket Associations/Clubs, schools, media, commercial partners
- growing commercial support for Club and Association cricket in conjunction with CA & CV specialist staff
- supporting the administration of affiliated Associations
- keeping the financial situation of Associations and Clubs under close review
- growing the number of volunteers
- management of the RCM/s in the Zone

A key part of the role would be to work with affiliated Associations to reduce the administrative workload at Association level so that volunteers could devote more time to Club management. While Associations would retain control over local policy decisions, there is real potential in centralising functions such as fixture creation, umpires appointments, and so on.

Considerable travel would be required by the Executive Officer throughout the Zone area to meet regularly with all stakeholders and to manage the RCM/s who would remain in their current geographic locations.

## **6.6 VCCL TRANSITION**

A Working Party should be established comprising representatives of CV and the VCCL to determine which of the various VCCL administrative functions is reallocated to Zone Boards and which would be managed by staff. Current funding of the VCCL by CV would be redirected to a staff member with specific responsibility for administrative matters to do with Country cricket.

Particular matters include (but are not limited to) – the conduct of Melbourne Country Week, selection and funding of the Country team for the Australian Championships, the conduct of the Under 21 championship, discipline issues, review of Region boundaries to reduce the size of the Western Country Region and to ensure no overlap with metropolitan Regions.

Decisions should be finalised in time for the commencement of the 2016/17 season.

## 7. Financial

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A Club cricket survey done by CA during the season showed funding as the biggest area of concern, in three areas:

- (i) Provision of financial support for administration at Association level.
- (ii) Returning a greater percentage of revenue from Milo programs back to Clubs.
- (iii) Leveraging the media coverage of top cricket to create sponsorship revenue directed back to grass-roots cricket. National sponsors, when approached at local level, indicate that their budget is committed to Australian cricket. CV needs to engage CA in a constructive dialogue as to how additional funds can be directly generated for Country cricket as part of a sponsor's involvement at the professional level.

In the context of declining community levels of fitness and increasing obesity, cricket (like all active sports) has much to offer the community. There needs to be continued focus by CV and CA on persuading governments of the value of funding programs to engage the digital and sedentary generation in playing cricket.

## 8. Communication

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The formal channels used by CA and CV, while understood as necessary in most instances, are seen as directive and one-way. The channel upwards through Associations, Regions, the VCCL and finally to CV is convoluted and ineffective. There needs to be greater consultation with RCMs and others involved in grass-roots cricket when CA & CV are considering policy relating to Country cricket.

Effective communication is a skill and needs to be included in management training and professional development programs for CV staff.

## 9. Change Management

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Effecting change in any organisation can be a slow and challenging process. This is more so in voluntary organisations where decision-making can often be skewed to opinion-based rather than evidence-based.

The key lesson from this Review is the value of face-to-face meetings. Whatever flows from this Review will receive greatest support when explained directly to all local stake-holders, allowing matters to be questioned and if necessary modified to meet local needs. A program of local meetings, especially with those from Country cricket who contributed to this Review, should be a central feature of the implementation plan.

Written communication should be regarded as secondary and subsequent to these meetings, but there is widespread interest in the Review and an expectation that this report will be made available publicly. It might be better to construct a document combining this report with the actions the CV Board decides and the timeline for implementation.

## 10. Summary Of Recommendations

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The principal recommendations from this Review relate to resourcing and governance and are:

1. The governance of country cricket be restructured with 5 Zones encompassing the 8 existing Regions, each Zone with an independent Board and full-time Executive Officer. Estimated cost \$600,000 in year one.
2. The 5 Zone Chairmen meet quarterly with a CV Board Director who is assigned portfolio responsibility for Country cricket.
3. The CV Board to meet at least once per annum in differing country venues.
4. The VCCL be wound up by the start of season 2016/17 and its administrative functions be transferred to Zone Boards and management. Savings in CV administration grants from CV be used to fund a CV staff role to support country cricket. A Working Party be established to ensure a smooth transition.
5. The budgets of Regional Cricket Managers be increased by \$50,000 per region. Cost in year one \$400,000. Part of this increase to be applied to supporting the administration of Associations.
6. Discussions be held with CA as a high priority to find new sources of revenue from national sponsorships which are applied directly to Country cricket.

There are a number of other recommendations as follows:

1. Increased emphasis be placed on resourcing provision of coaches; recruitment and training of umpires; and a pathways program to develop Club administrators.
2. Creation of strategies to expand playing opportunities for girls and women.
3. Development of closer relationships with Local Government Authorities.
4. Consideration of a policy position to ensure Club cricket remains essentially amateur.
5. Evaluation of a possible strategic relationship with Tennis Victoria.
6. Continued sourcing of government funding.
7. A follow-up Review be conducted in 3 years' time.

Other recommendations for management to handle:

1. CA & CV to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in game and market development and to communicate outcomes.
2. Review the MILO development programs funding model/s to provide greater funding to Clubs from fees paid by parents and to reduce waste in the provision of promotional material.
3. Consider how to reduce the impost of time and distance in Pathways program training/selection/playing events, especially for those who live far away from Melbourne.
4. Review the effectiveness of the Premier round in consultation with Country host areas.
5. Hold talks with the ACA re staging more elite matches in country areas.

# REVIEW OF COUNTRY CRICKET IN VICTORIA 2014/15

## ATTACHMENT 1 SCHEDULE OF MAJOR MEETINGS

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- Barwon – 15<sup>th</sup> December – Regional Board; Geelong CC. 16<sup>th</sup> December - LGA representatives (Geelong)
- Central Highlands – 2<sup>nd</sup> December – LGA representatives; Regional Board. 11<sup>th</sup> December – Association representatives (both Ballarat)
- Gippsland – 3<sup>rd</sup> December – Regional Board (Traralgon)
- Mallee- Murray – 8<sup>th</sup> December – Regional Board (Mildura); 18<sup>th</sup> February – Swan Hill CA
- North East Country – 17<sup>th</sup> November – Regional Board (Wangaratta)
- Northern Rivers - 19<sup>th</sup> November – Regional Board (Kyabram). 26<sup>th</sup> November – Association representatives (Shepparton)
- South East Country – 17<sup>th</sup> December – Regional Board (Devon Meadows)
- Western Country – 23<sup>rd</sup> November – Regional Board (Hamilton)
  
- VCCL Board – 1<sup>st</sup> February (Melbourne)
  
- Regional Cricket Managers conference – 3<sup>rd</sup> March (Melbourne)

# REVIEW OF COUNTRY CRICKET IN VICTORIA 2014/15

## ATTACHMENT 2 VICTORIAN CENSUS FIGURES 2006/07 TO 2014/15

Category	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<b>Associations</b>									
- Country	53	51	54	54	54	54	49	52	52
- Metro	24	26	23	23	23	22	26	27	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Clubs</b>									
- Country	613	598	651	605	600	573	587	588	587
- Metro	515	506	523	495	512	503	490	519	546
- Not affiliated	-	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,112</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>1,133</b>
<b>Club Players</b>									
- Junior Country	20,145	21,075	22,875	23,025	23,520	20,940	19,080	23,790	24,405
- Junior Metro	26,400	27,840	29,415	29,280	28,590	26,160	25,005	28,935	29,220
- Senior Country	24,120	24,300	23,025	24,240	24,765	25,335	23,715	29,910	30,570
- Senior Metro	30,090	30,210	28,065	32,265	29,055	28,065	27,495	33,885	36,435
- Veterans Country	-	-	210	105	150	180	285	195	225
- Veterans Metro	-	-	2,460	2,655	3,120	2,985	3,015	2,940	2,820
- Female Country	-	-	990	1,020	1,200	1,075	1,065	1,569	1,950
- Female Metro	-	-	1,575	1,185	1,365	1,247	1,061	1,399	1,735
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,755</b>	<b>103,425</b>	<b>108,615</b>	<b>113,775</b>	<b>111,765</b>	<b>105,997</b>	<b>99,900</b>	<b>121,725</b>	<b>123,675</b>
<b>In2CRICKET</b>									
- Country	8,110	7,609	7,810	12,120	12,675	15,672	16,694	24,686	22,454
- Metro	7,409	8,820	9,735	16,718	16,705	20,820	34,572	43,458	37,082
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,519</b>	<b>16,429</b>	<b>17,545</b>	<b>28,838</b>	<b>29,380</b>	<b>36,492</b>	<b>51,266</b>	<b>68,144</b>	<b>59,536</b>
<b>School</b>									
- T20 Blast - Primary	15,616	18,530	21,590	25,740	30,220	32,530	34,064	35,390	38,260
- T20 Blast - Secondary	6,020	5,880	7,010	7,930	8,290	8,560	9,440	10,390	8,470
- Traditional	43,459	42,712	42,109	23,040	33,825	31,965	20,970	25,155	20,625
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,095</b>	<b>67,122</b>	<b>70,709</b>	<b>56,710</b>	<b>72,335</b>	<b>73,055</b>	<b>64,474</b>	<b>70,935</b>	<b>67,355</b>
<b>Indoor Cricket</b>									
Schools	-	-	-	-	19,371	23,034	23,366	24,891	24,191
Club	-	-	-	-	33,781	31,713	39,160	41,595	42,449
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53,152</b>	<b>54,747</b>	<b>62,526</b>	<b>66,486</b>	<b>66,640</b>
<b>Lifestyle<sup>^</sup></b>									
- Country	-	-	2,520	1,240	1,137	222	205	410	995
- Metro	-	-	5,599	0	3,083	3,034	1,790	820	5,917
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,510</b>	<b>3,369</b>	<b>8,119</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>4,220</b>	<b>3,256</b>	<b>1,995</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>6,912</b>
Coaches (accredited)	-	-	-	-	-	4,612	5,497	3,384	3,794
Umpires (accredited)	-	-	-	-	1,453	1,782	1,901	2,065	2,254
<b>Total Players*</b>	<b>181,369</b>	<b>186,976</b>	<b>196,869</b>	<b>199,323</b>	<b>266,632</b>	<b>270,291</b>	<b>278,166</b>	<b>327,290</b>	<b>317,206</b>
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>184,879</b>	<b>190,345</b>	<b>204,988</b>	<b>200,563</b>	<b>272,305</b>	<b>279,941</b>	<b>287,559</b>	<b>333,969</b>	<b>330,166</b>

\* **Total Players** includes *Club Players, In2CRICKET, School & Indoor Cricket* only

<sup>^</sup> **Lifestyle** is not included in **Total Players** as it does not satisfy the 4 days of cricket qualification

2009/10 - Play Cricket programs moved from Lifestyle to in2CRICKET

2010/11 - Community programs moved to Lifestyle

2010/11 - Indoor Cricket incorporated into CV census

2013/14 - Club Players definition aligned to national definition



# REVIEW OF COUNTRY CRICKET IN VICTORIA 2014/15

## ATTACHMENT 3 COMPARISON 2014/15 TO 2013/14

Association	Junior Teams	Junior Supp & Rep	Senior Teams	Senior Supp & Rep	TOTAL TEAMS	TOTAL PLAYERS
Alberton CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bairnsdale CA Inc	2	0	-3	0	-1	-15
Ballarat CA	3	0	-3	-4	-4	-60
Bellarine Peninsula CA	0	0	-1	0	-1	-15
Benalla & District CA	-4	0	-4	0	-8	-120
Bendigo District CA	-2	0	0	0	-2	-30
Casterton District CA	-1	0	0	0	-1	-15
Castlemaine & District CA	1	0	0	-2	-1	-15
Central Gippsland CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colac District CA	2	0	-1	0	1	15
Cricket Albury Wodonga	-1	0	4	0	3	45
Cricket Shepparton	-3	-1	-1	5	0	0
Donald Junior CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emu Valley CA	0	0	-3	-2	-5	-75
Ferntree Gully and District CA	-1	0	4	0	3	45
Geelong CA	0	0	-22	0	-22	-330
Geelong Junior CA	-6	-16	0	0	-22	-330
Gisborne & District CA	-2	8	2	0	8	120
Goulburn Murray Cricket	0	0	0	-1	-1	-15
Grampians CA	0	0	-3	19	16	240
Grassmere CA	0	0	3	0	3	45
Grenville CA	0	0	1	0	1	15
Hamilton District CA	-5	0	-4	6	-3	-45
Horsham CA	6	3	-2	0	7	105
Leongatha & District CA	-3	0	1	0	-2	-30
Maryborough & District CA	5	0	-1	0	4	60
Mornington Peninsula CA	8	0	0	0	8	120
Mt Gambier & District CA	0	0	-1	1	0	0
Murray Valley CA	1	0	-1	0	0	0
Northern Districts CA	-2	0	0	0	-2	-30
Northern United CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portland & District CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pyrenees CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Cliffs CA	-4	0	1	0	-3	-45
Robinvale District CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rutherglen Junior CA	1	0	0	0	1	15
Sale-Maffra CA	-5	0	-6	-5	-16	-240
Seymour District CA	4	0	-1	13	16	240
South West CA	-2	0	3	-2	-1	-15
Sunraysia CA	-7	-4	-1	0	-12	-180
Swan Hill District CA	1	0	1	0	2	30
Traralgon & District CA	-3	0	-2	3	-2	-30
Upper Loddon CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wangaratta and District CA	1	0	0	0	1	15
Warragul and District CA	3	0	0	0	3	45
Warrnambool and District CA	0	14	2	0	16	240
West Gippsland CA	13	0	-2	0	11	165
West Wimmera CA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wimmera Mallee CA	0	0	1	0	1	15
Yarra Valley CA	0	0	24	0	24	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-30</b>

NB: Assumption is 15 players per team