



PLAYER WELLBEING PLAN

ANU Women's Football Club Player Wellbeing Plan

Endorsed September 2026

Purpose

ANU Women's Football Club is committed to supporting the physical, mental and social wellbeing of our players. We want ANUWFC to be a place where women (cis and trans) and non-binary people can enjoy football, develop as players, build connections and participate in an environment that is safe, supportive and respectful.

Player wellbeing is broader than responding when something goes wrong. It includes the everyday experiences that help people feel healthy, connected, supported and able to participate in football in a way that works for them.

This Plan sets out the practical actions ANUWFC will take to support player wellbeing while recognising that ANUWFC is a volunteer-run community football club and is not a health, counselling or medical service.

Our approach

ANUWFC will support player wellbeing through six areas:

- Safe football
- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Belonging and inclusion
- Accessible participation
- Player voice and support

Our aim is to provide practical support, clear information and appropriate pathways to professional services where required.

Safe football

Our commitment

Players should be able to participate without experiencing abuse, harassment, discrimination, bullying or other harmful behaviour.

We will:

- maintain and implement the ANUWFC Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- maintain clear and accessible reporting pathways
- appoint a Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact (Player Welfare Officer)
- communicate expected behaviours to players, coaches and volunteers
- respond appropriately when safety or welfare concerns are raised
- promote Football Australia and Capital Football safeguarding and Member Protection processes
- maintain appropriate privacy and confidentiality when managing player welfare matters.

Success looks like

Players know:

- what behaviour is expected
- who they can contact if something happens
- how to raise a concern
- that concerns will be taken seriously.

Physical wellbeing and injury support

Our commitment

We want players to be able to participate safely and make informed decisions about their physical health. Football involves a risk of injury, but ANUWFC can take reasonable steps to support prevention, treatment and safe return to play.

We will:

- provide players and coaches with appropriate warm-up and injury-prevention information
- promote evidence-informed programs and resources where available
- maintain access to relevant allied-health partnerships where financially and operationally practical
- provide clear information about injury reporting and insurance processes
- encourage injured players to seek appropriate professional assessment
- support gradual and appropriate return to training and competition
- discourage players from feeling pressured to play through significant injury
- ensure coaches understand that player safety takes priority over match results.

Coaches are expected to:

- take reports of injury seriously
- avoid pressuring injured players to participate
- encourage appropriate professional advice where necessary
- support reasonable modifications during return to play.

Success looks like

- injury-prevention information is available to all teams
- players understand where to seek support following an injury
- coaches consistently prioritise player safety
- players feel able to say they are injured or unable to play without unreasonable pressure.

Mental wellbeing

Our commitment

Football can play an important role in connection, enjoyment and wellbeing. At the same time, players may experience mental-health challenges, stress, burnout, grief, study or work pressures, relationship difficulties and other circumstances that affect their participation.

ANUWFC aims to create a supportive environment without expecting club volunteers to act as counsellors or mental-health professionals.

We will:

- provide accessible information about mental-health and wellbeing support services
- maintain a Player Welfare contact for members who need help identifying support options
- encourage players to speak up when they are struggling
- promote supportive and non-stigmatising language
- encourage coaches to check in appropriately with players
- respect reasonable privacy
- provide flexibility where practical when personal circumstances affect football participation
- refer players to qualified professional support where appropriate.

We will not:

- attempt to diagnose mental-health conditions
- expect coaches or teammates to provide counselling
- shame players for needing time away from football
- share private wellbeing information unnecessarily.

Success looks like

Players know that asking for support is normal and know where they can go for further assistance.

Belonging and inclusion

Our commitment

Feeling connected and valued is fundamental to player wellbeing. ANUWFC will continue to create a football environment where women (cis and trans) and non-binary people feel welcome and able to participate authentically.

We will:

- implement the ANUWFC Values and Club Behaviours Framework
- follow the ANUWFC Inclusive Communications Guide
- implement the ANUWFC Respect and Anti-Racism Framework
- welcome new players into teams and the broader club
- promote connection between teams and playing divisions
- encourage social opportunities that do not depend on alcohol consumption
- respect names, pronouns, identities and individual circumstances
- challenge discriminatory or exclusionary behaviour
- recognise that players have different football goals and experiences
- avoid treating one division or playing level as more valuable than another.

Success looks like

Players report feeling:

- welcome
- respected
- connected to their team
- connected to ANUWFC
- able to be themselves at the club.

Accessible participation

Our commitment

Where reasonably possible, financial or personal circumstances should not unnecessarily prevent someone from continuing to participate in football.

We will:

- maintain reasonable payment-plan options
- continue the Heather Reid AM Bursary or equivalent financial-support mechanism, subject to available resources
- communicate financial-support options discreetly and respectfully
- consider player circumstances when managing registration and payment issues
- provide information about relevant external assistance where available
- keep unnecessary participation costs to a minimum
- consider accessibility when organising club events and activities.

Players seeking financial assistance will be treated respectfully and confidentially.

Success looks like

Players know where to seek help if registration or other football costs become a barrier to participation.

Player voice

Our commitment

Players should have opportunities to tell ANUWFC what is working, what is not and where their experience could be improved.

We will:

- conduct an annual Player Experience Survey
- provide opportunities for anonymous feedback
- encourage players to raise issues with coaches, team managers, welfare contacts or committee members
- review trends in player feedback
- seek feedback from players leaving the club where practical
- consider player feedback when developing club policies and priorities.

The survey will include questions relating to:

- safety
- inclusion
- coaching
- team culture
- communication
- player development
- physical wellbeing
- connection and belonging
- overall satisfaction.

Success looks like

ANUWFC can identify wellbeing issues early and make evidence-informed improvements rather than relying solely on anecdotal feedback.

Coach and team culture

Our commitment

Coaches have a significant influence on player experience and wellbeing. We expect ANUWFC coaches to create environments that are competitive, supportive and respectful.

Coaches will be encouraged to:

- communicate expectations clearly
- treat players fairly and respectfully
- provide constructive feedback
- recognise effort and development as well as results
- avoid humiliation, intimidation or degrading coaching methods
- check in when a player's behaviour or wellbeing changes significantly
- respect reasonable player boundaries
- support injured players
- encourage connection within teams
- escalate welfare or safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Coaches are not expected to solve personal or health issues. Their role is to notice, support and refer where necessary.

Supporting players through injury or extended absence

Players who are injured or temporarily unable to participate should continue to feel part of their team and club. Where practical, teams should:

- keep injured players included in team communications
- welcome them at matches and social activities
- avoid implying that injured players are letting the team down
- support appropriate return to play
- recognise that recovery timelines vary
- maintain reasonable contact during extended absence.

Player welfare contact

ANUWFC will maintain an identified Player Welfare Officer or equivalent contact. The role may include:

- listening to player concerns
- helping players identify available options
- providing information about club and external support services
- helping players navigate club processes
- receiving welfare or safeguarding concerns
- referring serious matters through appropriate reporting pathways
- supporting wellbeing initiatives.

The Player Welfare Officer is not responsible for:

- providing therapy or counselling
- diagnosing injuries or health conditions
- investigating serious misconduct
- determining complex complaints
- providing emergency assistance.

Where something falls outside the club's role, the Player Welfare Officer will help identify the appropriate external pathway where possible.

Player wellbeing information

ANUWFC will maintain an accessible player wellbeing resource, ideally through the club website, containing information about areas such as:

- mental-health support
- injury support
- health services
- safeguarding and reporting
- discrimination and Member Protection
- financial assistance
- insurance
- emergency support
- relevant Football Australia and Capital Football resources.

Information should be reviewed periodically to ensure links and contact information remain current.

Measuring player wellbeing

ANUWFC will take a simple and proportionate approach to measuring wellbeing. We will not attempt to clinically assess player mental or physical health. Instead, we will monitor indicators of the club environment, including:

- player retention
- Player Experience Survey results
- reports of safety and belonging
- recurring themes raised with the Player Welfare Officer
- injury-support feedback
- coach feedback
- participation in club activities
- reasons players provide for leaving the club.

Where appropriate, information reported to the Committee will be aggregated or de-identified.

Our player wellbeing targets

By 2030, ANUWFC aims for:

- at least 90% of surveyed players to report that they feel safe at ANUWFC
- at least 90% to report that they feel welcome and included
- at least 85% to report satisfaction with their overall club experience
- all teams to receive player wellbeing and safeguarding information each season
- all coaches to receive relevant welfare and safeguarding information through annual induction
- an annual Player Experience Survey to be completed and reviewed
- player retention trends to be monitored annually.

What ANUWFC can and cannot provide

ANUWFC can:

- listen
- provide information
- create a supportive football environment
- provide reasonable adjustments where practical
- maintain clear welfare and safeguarding pathways
- connect members with appropriate resources
- encourage safe participation
- respond to issues within the club's role.

ANUWFC cannot:

- provide medical treatment
- provide professional counselling
- diagnose physical or mental-health conditions
- provide crisis intervention
- replace emergency services
- investigate criminal allegations
- guarantee that football participation will resolve personal wellbeing concerns.

Recognising these boundaries protects both our players and our volunteers.

Governance and review

The ANUWFC Committee will oversee implementation of this Plan, with the Player Welfare Officer or equivalent role providing input where appropriate. The Plan will be reviewed annually at a practical level to ensure:

- contact information remains current
- wellbeing resources remain accessible
- annual player feedback has been considered
- identified wellbeing issues have been addressed where possible
- relevant actions remain appropriate for the club.

A full review will occur at least every three years or alongside significant changes to ANUWFC's Strategic Plan or Football Australia/Capital Football requirements.

Our commitment to player wellbeing

Football should add something positive to people's lives. At ANUWFC, we want players to be challenged on the field, supported off it and connected to a community in which they feel they belong. We cannot prevent every injury, solve every personal difficulty or provide every kind of support a player may need.

What we can do is create a club where people are treated with respect, where asking for help is welcomed, where safety comes before results and where players know they do not have to navigate difficult situations alone.

Player wellbeing is not the responsibility of one person or one policy. It is part of how we play, coach, lead and look after one another.

Version control

Version 1.0 drafted August 2026.