



MEMORANDUM

To: Maroubra Saints, Moore Park Tigers and East Sydney Junior Clubs

Andrew Varasdi - Head of AFL NSW/ACT

Cc: Bronte Mannering - Community Football Manager, Greater Sydney and Northern NSW
Zoe Hynec - Community Football and Competition Manager, AFL Sydney Seniors
Dani Paszkiewicz - Community Football and Competition Manager, AFL Sydney Junior

From: Sam Zikman - Manager, Greater Sydney and Northern NSW **Date:** 12 December 2025

Re: Junior Senior Pathway Alignment Update – East Region

Dear Maroubra Saints, Moore Park Tigers and East Sydney Junior Clubs,

AFL NSW/ACT hopes all clubs and their members have enjoyed a well-earned break after another fantastic year of community football. The 2025 season was full of energy, growth and great moments across all East region clubs, and we want to thank every player, parent, volunteer, coach and committee member for the important role you played in making it such a successful year. We are already looking forward to working with you again in 2026 and welcoming everyone back for another exciting season of footy.

As part of our planning for the years ahead, AFL NSW/ACT is writing to share an update on the alignment between Junior and Senior Clubs in the East region. These alignments help provide clearer pathways for players as they progress through Youth football and into the Senior Clubs.

Following feedback from clubs, as well as a detailed review, AFL NSW/ACT has introduced changes to help ensure pathways are geographically sensible, easier to understand and better support players as they transition to higher levels.

The previous shared pathway model operating in the East was the only structure of its kind in Greater Sydney and had increasingly created confusion, tension, and inconsistent experiences for families, players and clubs. To provide clarity and simplicity, the shared pathway has now been replaced with two clear geographical pathways, effective immediately;

Pathway	Local Government Areas	Aligned Clubs
East-Bayside	Randwick & Bayside LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">UNSW-ES Bulldogs AFC <i>(Premier Division & Divisional Club)</i>Randwick City Saints AFC <i>(Divisional Club only)</i>Maroubra Saints Juniors AFC

East-Parkside	Waverley & Woollahra LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UTS AFC Bats <i>(Premier Division & Divisional Club)</i> • East Sydney Junior AFC • Moore Park Tigers Juniors AFC
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To support a smooth transition, players aging out of junior football between 2026 and 2028 will continue to be recognised equally by both UNSW-ES and UTS AFC under the Player Points System (PPS). This ensures no youth player approaching the transition from Junior to Senior football is disadvantaged by the pathway changes. The transition applies specifically to the 2026 top-age Under 15 (born 2011) and the Under 17 (born 2009 and 2010) cohorts, as these players are the ones who will begin entering senior football during the transition period. These players will be treated as 1-point home players under the PPS Policy at both Senior Clubs, regardless of which aligned pathway their Junior Club now falls under.

Importantly, while these pathways help guide development and support structures, every player will always retain the freedom to play for any Senior Club they choose.

AFL NSW/ACT will continue to review and refine pathways across Greater Sydney to ensure they remain effective and make sense for the footy community. Our aligned pathways are designed to help players love and connect with the game as they progress from NAB AFL Auskick/Superkick, through Junior and Youth Football, and ultimately into Senior Clubs.

Thank you again for your commitment throughout 2025. We look forward to working with all clubs, player, parent, volunteer and coach across the East region as we head into the 2026 season and beyond.

To help clubs and members better understand the pathway changes in the East region, we have included an FAQ document in Appendix One, along with a complete overview of Junior Club to Premier Division Club aligned pathways across Greater Sydney in Appendix Two.

If you have any questions about these pathway updates, please reach out to your Junior Club committee.

Kind regards,



Sam Zikman

Manager, Greater Sydney and Northern NSW

Appendix One – Frequently Asked Questions

For Families & Players – AFL NSW/ACT

1. What is a Junior–Senior Pathway?

A pathway is the formal link between Junior Clubs and Senior Clubs. It helps guide player development, provides clearer opportunities as players move into Youth and Senior football, and ensures Junior and Senior Clubs work together to support players, coaches, volunteers and families.

2. Why are the pathways changing?

The previous shared pathway was the only model of its type in Greater Sydney. Over time, it created confusion for families, tension between clubs, and increased administrative pressure. The new model is designed to be simpler, geographically consistent, easier to understand and more supportive of player development and transition through the pathway.

3. What are the new pathways in the East Region?

The East-Bayside Pathway operates within the Randwick and Bayside Local Government Areas. This pathway includes UNSW-ES Bulldogs (Premier Division and Divisional Club), Randwick City Saints Seniors (Divisional Club only), and Maroubra Saints Juniors.

The East-Parkside Pathway will service families and clubs located within the Waverley and Woollahra Local Government Areas. This pathway includes UTS AFC Bats (Premier Division and Divisional Club), East Sydney Juniors, and Moore Park Tigers Juniors.

4. Does this affect which Senior Club my child can play for in the future?

No. All players remain free to choose any Senior Club they wish. The pathway helps guide development and PPS rules, but it does not restrict choice of a Senior Club, both within the East region or outside it.

5. What is the PPS and why does it matter?

The PPS (Player Points System) is a fairness and equalisation tool used in senior community football. Each Premier Division Team has a points cap, and every player is assigned a points value based on factors such as whether they are a local junior, have moved clubs, or have played at higher levels. The system helps keep competitions even, stops clubs from “stacking” teams by recruiting too many high-level players, supports player loyalty and junior development, and reduces pressure on clubs to spend money on player payments. A fair and balanced competition creates a better experience for players, families and volunteers and helps keep community football sustainable in the long term.

5. What is the “transition period” and who does it apply to?

Players aging out of junior football in 2026, 2027 and 2028 will be recognised as 1-point home players at both UNSW-ES Bulldogs and UTS AFC Bats. This applies to the 2026 top-age Under 15 and Under 17 cohorts.

6. Why is geography now the main factor?

Geography has always been a key factor, as it makes pathways easier to understand and more practical for families. It reflects natural travel patterns, school communities and established friendships, helping keep football accessible and enjoyable.

8. Will this change the way Senior Clubs engage with Junior Clubs?

Yes. Senior Clubs will now work exclusively with the Junior Clubs in their aligned pathway. This includes coaching support, talent development, club engagement and player experience initiatives, ensuring equal support within each pathway.

9. Are more pathway changes coming?

Potentially. AFL NSW/ACT will review pathway structures in other regions ahead of the 2027 season to ensure consistency and fairness across Greater Sydney.

10. Who can I speak to if I have questions?

Your Junior Club committee is the first point of contact for any pathway-related questions. Clubs can also liaise with AFL NSW/ACT for further detail.

11. Will this change my child’s 2026 team or competition?

No. These updates relate to pathway alignment and Senior Club connections. They do not affect team formation, grading or competition structures for 2026.

12. What is the main benefit for my child?

The new pathway structure provides clearer development opportunities, more consistent support from Senior Clubs, reduced confusion and a more stable long-term environment. Ultimately, it is designed to help every player feel supported, improve their skills and enjoy their football experience.

Appendix Two – Aligned Junior to Premier Division Pathways in Greater Sydney



No.	Region	LGA	Premier Club	Aligned Junior Clubs
1	North Shore	Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, Willoughby, Ku-Ring-Kai and North Sydney	North Shore Bombers	Willoughby Wildcats, Mosman Swans, Lane Cove Cats and St Ives Saints.
2	Northern Beaches	Northern Beaches	Manly Warringah Wolves	Balgowlah Suns, Manly Bombers, Pittwater Tigers and Forest Lions.
3	East-Parkside	Woollarha and Waverley	UTS AFC Bats	East Sydney and Moore Park Tigers
4	East-Bayside	Randwick and Bayside*	UNSW-ES Bulldogs	Maroubra Saints
5	City	Sydney	Sydney University	Glebe Greyhounds, Leichhardt Cygnets and Newtown Swans
6	South	Georges River, Sutherland Shire and Bayside*	St. George Dragons	Bangor Tigers, Cronulla Juniors, Heathcote-Engadine Hawks, Miranda Bombers, Penshurst Panthers and Ramsgate Rams
7	North-West	Hornsby and Ryde	Pennant Hills Demons	Pennant Hills Demons, Hornsby-Berowra Eagles, Westbrook Bulldogs and North Ryde Dockers
8	Hills	Hills and Hawkesbury	East Coast Eagles	Baulkham Hills Hawks, Kellyville/Rouse Hill Magpie and Hawkesbury Saints
9	Inner West	Canada Bay, Inner West, Burwood, Canterbury-Bankstown* and Strathfield	Inner West Magpies	Drummoyne Power, Concord GIANTS, and Inner West Magpies Juniors
10	South-West	Camden, Wollondilly, Liverpool and Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown*	South West Sydney Blues	Camden Cats, Wollondilly Redbacks, Ingleburn Magpies, Bankstown Bullsharks, Liverpool Eagles, South West Tigers and Macarthur Bulldogs
11	West	Parramatta, Cumberland, Fairfield, Penrith, Blue Mountains and Blacktown	Parramatta Goannas	Parramatta Lions, Greystanes Goannas, Fairfield Falcons, Blacktown City Suns, Penrith GIANTS, Blue Mountains Kangaroos and Emu Plains Glenmore Park Lions

* Denotes shared LGA