

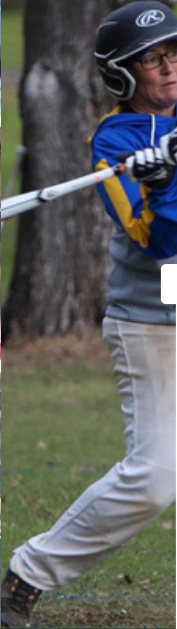


BASEBALL
NEW SOUTH WALES



PLAY BALL NSW

BASEBALL NSW STRATEGIC PLAN
HORIZON 1: 2026 - 2029



2026-2029

Building the foundation. Growing the game.

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FOREWORD

FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

Baseball in New South Wales has always been built on commitment. Volunteers lining fields before sunrise. Coaches passing knowledge across generations. Families coming back season after season. That foundation hasn't changed, and it's something we don't take for granted.

But the world around us has changed. Families are more discerning about how they spend their time and money. Young people have more options than ever. Expectations around governance, inclusion and participant experience have risen, and rightly so.

Our State of Play review was clear. The grassroots culture of this sport is healthy and deeply valued. At the same time, the system is operating close to its structural limits. Satisfaction drops as players move into representative pathways. Only 39% of volunteers feel adequately supported. Female participants experience gaps in opportunity and progression. Cost is a real barrier for some.

This plan is our response to that. It's a practical, honest blueprint for what we're doing right now to make baseball stronger; and what that work will grow into over the next decade.

The work begins this season. The changes we're making now; to governance, to volunteer support, to how we run representative programs, to how we reach new communities - are what will define the sport's next chapter.

"We move forward confident in our community, and clear-eyed about the work ahead."

Sue Cunningham, Chairperson | **Matt Rippon**, Chief Executive Officer

WHERE WE STAND

Before setting out what we want to achieve, it's worth being honest about where we are. The *State of Play* consultation gave us a clear picture; one that's largely encouraging, but one that also shows us where the work is needed.

89%

of current players intend to come back next season

70%

satisfied with their most recent season overall

67%

would recommend baseball to a friend or family member

Those numbers reflect a community that genuinely loves this sport. The sense of belonging that baseball creates at club level is real and it's powerful.

But the same consultation told us that growth is almost entirely reliant on personal networks - nearly 70% of participants found the sport through family or friends. That's a strength, but it's also a ceiling. If we want to grow, we need to be visible beyond our existing community, not just well-loved within it.

WHERE THE WORK IS NEEDED

- Confidence in the system drops noticeably as players progress into representative pathways
- Only 39% of volunteers feel adequately supported in their roles – a risk to the whole system
- Female participants report clear gaps in opportunity and progression, particularly through adolescence
- Cost is a real barrier to participation for some families
- Growth is over-reliant on word-of-mouth rather than broader visibility or active recruitment

The challenge ahead isn't about starting from scratch. It's about strengthening a system that already has genuine community support, and making it good enough to retain people, attract new participants, and earn confidence at every level. That's exactly what this strategy is designed to do.



OUR DIRECTION

WHERE WE'RE HEADED

This strategy is guided by a simple ambition: baseball in NSW should be a sport that's genuinely easy to join, enjoyable to play, and worth staying in for life. That sounds straight forward, but it requires real work across every part of the system.

OUR VISION

Baseball in NSW will be a high-performing, inclusive sport - one that people choose to be part of; at any age, any format, any level, and in any role.

OUR MISSION

Baseball NSW exists to create the conditions where players, coaches, officials, volunteers and clubs can perform at their best. We do that by providing clear pathways, honest governance, practical support, and a consistent focus on the participant experience.

OUR STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES:

- ✓ A trusted, transparent organisation that puts participants at the centre of decisions
- ✓ A leader in inclusive participation - particularly for women, girls, within schools and regional communities
- ✓ A recognised performance pathway, connected from grassroots through to the national stage
- ✓ An organisation that genuinely supports and values its volunteers, coaches and officials
- ✓ Commercially sustainable, with the revenue base to invest in the sport's future

These aren't aspirations for a distant future. They're the outcomes we're building toward from day one of this plan.

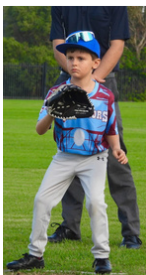
WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Strategy without accountability is just good intentions. These are the indicators we'll use to measure genuine progress toward our 2030 ambitions - tracked annually, reported transparently, and used to shape the next phase of this plan.

WHAT WE'RE MEASURING	THE TARGET BY 2030
Overall growth & retention	10%+ cumulative growth, with 70%+ of players returning each season
Female participation	Women's and girls' participation growing faster than the overall rate, targeting 20% of total participation.
Volunteer confidence	70%+ of volunteers feeling supported and confident in their roles
Performance Pathway clarity	A clearly understood pathway system, with equitable access across metro and regional areas
Coach & umpire capability	5% increase in accredited coaches and umpires; improved satisfaction scores
Regional participation	Growth and retention aligned to population corridors and facility capacity
Competitive experience	80%+ participant satisfaction across State League and representative programs
Infrastructure utilisation	Data-led infrastructure planning, aligned to where the sport is growing
New program participant growth	Measurable participation uplift from alternative format programs

HOW WE'RE ORGANISED

Baseball in NSW caters to a wide range of people; from a six-year-old playing T-ball for the first time, to a state representative athlete, to a volunteer umpire who's been at their club for twenty years. This strategy is built around four areas that together cover the full scope of what we do and who we serve.



PLAY — PARTICIPATION, ACCESS AND EXPERIENCE

The foundation of everything

Making baseball accessible, enjoyable and worth coming back to - at every age, in every region. Community and state level competitions and tournaments, school programs, flexible and more inclusive formats, expansion of women's and girls offerings, and the quality of the on-field experience for all participants.



PERFORM — PATHWAYS AND COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE

For players who want to push further

Making sure the journey from club to association to state is clear, trusted and connected. These pathways should inspire players without creating a two-tier sport - the performance system exists to serve baseball, not the other way around.



PEOPLE — VOLUNTEERS, WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP

None of this works without people

Ensuring the volunteers, coaches, officials and administrators who show up week after week feel supported. We owe them better systems, clearer roles, genuine support, and the confidence that the organisation has their back.



PROFILE — VISIBILITY, PARTNERSHIPS AND VOICE

Baseball in NSW has a story worth telling

Telling it better - through stronger communications, authentic storytelling, commercial partnerships, and a brand that reflects the community we actually are. Visibility drives participation. Participation drives sustainability.

These four areas are connected and reinforce each other. A stronger PLAY base grows the talent pool for PERFORM. A well-supported PEOPLE workforce improves the quality of PLAY. A stronger PROFILE attracts the partnerships that support it all. That's intentional.

NOW, NEXT AND BEYOND

This is a ten-year vision, delivered in three phases. The important thing to understand is that the work and the outcomes start now. Every action taken in Horizon 1 is a piece of the legacy collectively being built for the sport of baseball in NSW.

1

REIMAGINE · STARTING NOW

FY27-FY29 | The work begins this season

Get the foundations right. Build what lasts.

This is where we do the hard work. Governance clarity. A volunteer resource hub that actually helps people. Representative pathways that families can trust. Athlete monitoring. A Women & Girls Action Plan in motion. School programs expanding. A data foundation being built. A partnership prospectus launched.

We'll focus in on Umpire and Regional support, conduct our Women's League and Little League program and experience reviews, pilot flexible formats in key regions, and complete an infrastructure blueprint. By the end of Horizon 1, baseball in NSW will already look and feel different.

2

MOMENTUM

FY30-FY32

Build on what's working. Go deeper.

With stronger foundations in place, Horizon 2 is where we build depth and reach. Coaching and umpire pipelines mature. An embedded and evolving regional pathways ecosystem. Participation formats continue to expand. The brand and commercial position we've established continues to generate real returns. The community we've re-engaged through Horizon 1 shapes what Horizon 2 looks like - through the 2029 statewide survey, members drive the next phase.

3

LEGACY

FY33-FY35

The sport we've been building toward.

Horizon 3 is the result of everything we drive now. Long-term participation growth, sustained across gender and geography. Volunteers who feel recognised and supported. Performance pathways respected nationally. Facilities that match where the game is growing. An expansive and diverse base of commercial partnerships and revenue streams that reduces dependence on any single revenue source. **The legacy that started in 2026.**



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

PLAY — GETTING MORE PEOPLE PLAYING. KEEPING THEM.

Participation in NSW baseball is strong at club level, but there are real gaps that need addressing. Retention drops in the mid-teen years. Female participation isn't as continuous as it should be. Regional communities are sometimes underserved. And the sport is still too dependent on word-of-mouth to grow beyond its current base.

The goal is simple: make baseball easier to get into, and worth staying in.

WHAT WE'RE FOCUSED ON

- Keeping girls and young women connected to the sport through adolescence - not just getting them started
- Reducing drop-off among 14-18 year olds, a critical window where we're losing too many players
- Expanding flexible formats and social baseball options, particularly in schools and regional areas
- Reviewing how State League, Women's League and Little League competitions are structured and delivered
- Mapping infrastructure to where the sport is actually growing, not just where it's historically been

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE BY 2030

Retention above 70%. Women's and girls' participation making up a growing share of the total, with clearer pathways at every stage. Flexible formats contributing meaningfully to overall numbers. Families in regional NSW with the same access and experience as those in metro areas. 80%+ satisfaction across State League and representative competition. A positive baseball experience regardless of the format or level of the game.

WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW

These are the concrete actions all ready underway in Horizon 1 - programs, reviews and investments starting from FY27.

HORIZON 1 · FY27-FY29 · IN PROGRESS

- Implementing the Women & Girls Action Plan to embed continuity programs across the state
- Piloting alternative formats and flexible participation models in key regions and schools from FY27
- Drive improvements in State League, Women's League and Little League to enhance engagement, delivery and accessibility
- Expanding school engagement programs with a specific focus on regional reach
- Developing and piloting all-inclusive participation growth and retention strategy
- Completing an infrastructure blueprint to align facility investment with where demand actually is





STRATEGIC PRIORITY

PERFORM — A PERFORMANCE SYSTEM THAT PEOPLE TRUST

NSW has produced strong national results for years, and interest in representative programs remains high. But feedback from the State of Play process was clear: families and athletes aren't always confident in how pathways work, how athletes are developed, or how decisions get made. That has to change. A performance system only works if people believe in it.

WHAT WE'RE FOCUSED ON

- Making pathways transparent - from Club to Association to State to National - so players and families know what to expect
- Holistic athlete development that includes physical and mental wellbeing, not just performance metrics
- Better support for coaches and performance staff who work in representative programs
- Building partnerships with providers who can genuinely uplift our performance delivery

HORIZON 1 · FY27-FY29 · IN PROGRESS

- Integrating a High Performance Uplift Program across Sydney metropolitan and regional NSW from FY27
- Implementing athlete monitoring systems that track physical, mental and performance metrics
- Developing clear, communicated policies on travel, selection and showcase opportunities aligned to pathway objectives

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE BY 2030

A performance pathway that players and families genuinely trust. Selection processes that are transparent and development-focused. Athlete monitoring in place across all representative programs. A NSW system respected at the national level emphasised by improved event 'performance' and player experience outcomes.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

PEOPLE – SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Baseball runs on people who give their time freely. Coaches who show up to training. Umpires there every weekend. Club and Association administrators handling registrations and queries at all hours. Without them, there's no baseball. The State of Play told us commitment is still strong; but we need to provide greater support.

WHAT WE'RE FOCUSED ON

- Clarifying governance and operational support - who's responsible for what, and how we assist
- Simpler, clearer incident management so clubs aren't left to figure it out alone
- A volunteer resource hub that's genuinely useful, not just another policy document
- Coaching accreditation and professional development that keeps pace with what coaches actually need
- Supporting the umpire pathway with clear goal alignment and greater collaboration across baseball bodies.
- Embedding child safety and integrity compliance across all programs mandatory, monitored, not optional

HORIZON 1 · FY27-FY29 · IN PROGRESS

- Reviewing the constitution and standing committees to clarify roles and accountability from FY27
- Strengthening child safety and integrity frameworks, including mandatory training and ongoing monitoring
- Staged launch and evolution of new volunteer resource hub and capability development tools
- Coaching accreditation simplification with continuous professional development program upgrades
- Expanding umpire pathways with competency standards and mentoring support

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE BY 2030

A confident and supported volunteer workforce (70%+). Trusted and clear governance. Growing coaching and umpiring participation supported by accessible pathways. Simple and effective incident management with clear escalation. A volunteer hub that becomes the first point of support. Child safety and integrity embedded.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

PROFILE — TELLING THE BASEBALL STORY BETTER

Our proud history brought to life - using our legacy, achievements and stories to strengthen connection, pride and growth across the sport.

A stronger profile matters for practical reasons. It's how we attract new participants who aren't already connected to a club. It's how we make the case for investment. It's how we build commercial partnerships that give the sport more financial headroom. It's about our own community feeling pride in what they're part of.

WHAT WE'RE FOCUSED ON

- A refreshed, consistent brand that reflects who we collectively are as a sport
- Communications that celebrate our people and our stories, not just our programs and schedules
- Systems to understand what's working - tracking participation conversion and community engagement
- A structured approach to commercial and strategic partnerships that's scalable and credible

HORIZON 1 · FY27-FY29 · IN PROGRESS

- Rolling out a refreshed communications plan that tells the baseball in NSW story across all channels
- Activating ambassadors and storytellers from within the community to promote pathways and programs
- Launching a partnership prospectus to attract commercial and strategic partners who share our values

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE BY 2030

A brand that's recognisable, trusted and consistent. Commercial partnerships that contribute meaningfully to revenue. A community that sees itself reflected in how we communicate. New participants finding us because we're visible - not just because someone they know told them about us.

KEEPING OURSELVES HONEST

A strategy is only as good as how it's implemented and reviewed. This one will be tracked annually, tested against real data, and shaped by the people who deliver and experience baseball across NSW.

ANNUAL RHYTHM

- Delivery plans aligned to each strategic priority area
- Ongoing engagement with Advisory Committees, Associations and Clubs
- Regular monitoring of impact indicators
- Refinement of initiatives as we learn what works

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Continued feedback through stakeholder engagement across the baseball community
- Targeted consultation with clubs, volunteers and participants on key initiatives
- Not just consulted but involved in shaping direction

2028 MEMBER SURVEY

- Comprehensive statewide evaluation of Horizon 1
- Measures impact of what we've done, not just what we planned
- Members have a direct role in building Horizon 2

HORIZON 2 DEVELOPMENT (FY29 - FY30)

- Strategy refreshed, informed by member insights
- Collaborative development process with the baseball community
- What we've learned drives what comes next

"We plan to get things right, not just to get things done. This is a sport built on people and this strategy will succeed or fail on how well we listen to them."

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