



Broadford Football Netball Club  
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AFL Quality Club Bronze Level  
Good Sports Level 3



6/12/23

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Broadford football set to pause in 2024**

Broadford Football Netball Club's football department will go into recess in 2024.

BFNC financial members voted at a special general meeting last night, Wednesday, December 6, that the football will go into recess next year, while the Roos' netballers will explore their options to play in a winter competition in 2024.

BFNC had applied in August to join the Kyabram District Football Netball League, KDFNL, seeking to leave the Outer East Football Netball League, OEFNL, where it has played since 2020.

The reasons for wanting to move away from the OEFNL were following OEFNL league restructure changes, which resulted in:

- Combining division one and division two, which meant BFNC players, members and volunteers would need to travel even greater distances;
- Senior football salary cap being increased from \$75,000 in 2023 to \$100,000 in 2024;
- All clubs needing to field both football and netball teams in 2024 – no stand-alone netball or just one football side would be allowed.

After the KDFNL rejected the Roos' application to join their league, AFL Victoria advised that an appeal of the KDFNL decision was not available to BFNC due to the club wanting to move from a metropolitan-based league (OEFNL) to a country-based league (KDFNL).

The BFNC committee then sought alternative options for their immediate playing future.

A BFNC sub-committee formed earlier this year to investigate league options had determined if the KDFNL bid was rejected, the club would explore its next best options.

President Bonnie Welch said the club would now re-assess all viable options for finding a league to best suit BFNC's long-term future.

"Every decision that we have made throughout this journey has been open, transparent and informed, and most importantly, and led by our members in the best interests for our club for future sustainability on all levels," she said.

"While there isn't a league that is a perfect fit for us, what we would like is somewhere that sees the value that our community club can bring to their competition.

"The advocacy and engagement we undertook to enter the KDFNL clearly demonstrates a gap within the system where no matter what you present as a club, your future can be determined by other clubs.

“There is a clear need for an overall AFL Victoria structural review to ensure that viable clubs aren’t forced into an untenable situation. We are not the first club and certainly won’t be the last to be put in this position.”

Ms Welch said the club’s committee and senior coach Alwin Neilson had consulted closely with senior players, and were determined for the return of senior football in 2025.

“Even though the football program itself on field is on pause, our off field is just ramping up. An elected working group, with support from the executive committee, will ensure our action plan is implemented now.

“We hope to have announcements as early as possible with regards to where we will be playing in 2025.

“We are also working closer than ever with our junior club and are working towards some great initiatives to build stable and strong pathways for immediate and future generations.”

Ms Welch said the club acknowledged the contributions of the club’s players, volunteers and sponsors in the journey.

“We urge you all to get behind us and see the incredible work we’ve been doing and will continue to do to create something really special for our club,” she said.

“Anyone who is interested in supporting this process, particularly those who live in Broadford or surrounding communities, as well as life members, past players and sponsors, would be more than welcome to assist.

“While next season will look very different with no football, we will continue to have social functions and support our netball program, as well as fundraising for the future of the club.”

Ms Welch said club would work hard to ensure it had netball teams play in 2024.

“Our netball department has always been very united, competitive and we are excited at the opportunity to ensure the netball program continues in 2024,” she said.

Ms Welch thanked the OEFNL board and CEO Brett Connell, as well as OEFNL division two clubs for their support over the past four years and wish them every success into the future.

**For further information, contact BFNC president Bonnie Welch on 0430 152 342.**