

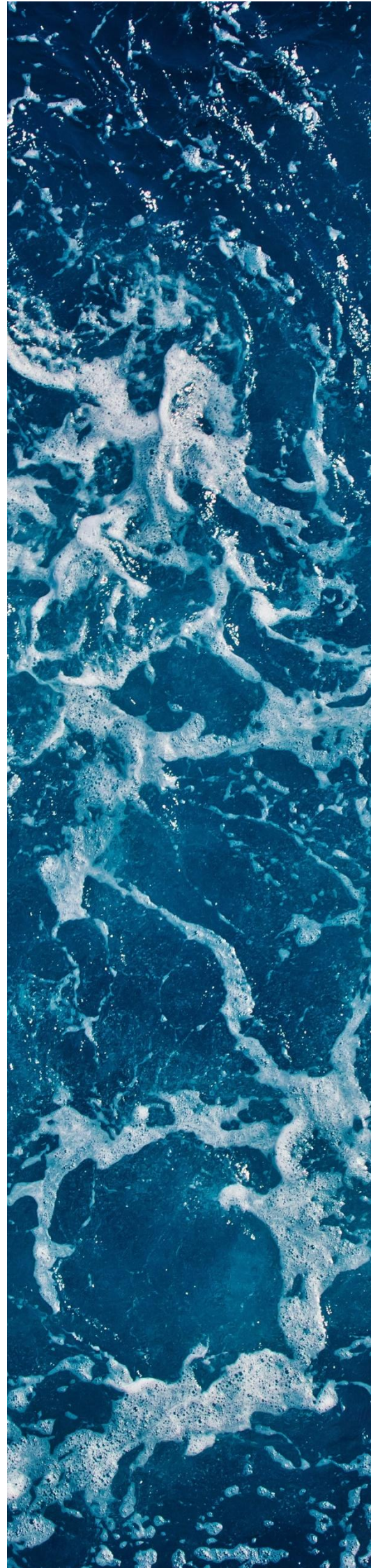
WATERMARK SEARCH INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATE BRIEF

General Counsel
Football Australia
June 2025



**FOOTBALL
AUSTRALIA**

Presented by Watermark Search International.
Trusted for over 40 years, focused on the future



About the Organisation

Football Australia (FA) is the national governing body for football in Australia and a member of [Fédération Internationale de Football Association](#) (FIFA), the international governing body for football. It governs all national teams, the A-Leagues (in Football Australia's capacity as the regulatory body), Australia Cup, National Premier Leagues and leads state, community, and grassroots football.

For more information, please refer to: footballaustralia.com.au

Culture and Values

Football in Australia is a melting pot of approximately 2 million participants represented by over 200 different cultures, we are proud to be the most diverse and globally connected sport within the Australian sporting landscape.

Football Australia's purpose is to 'bring communities together through football - connecting Australia to the world' while having a vision to 'be a leading football nation where everyone is inspired to live and love the game'.

To achieve this, we live by our company values which are:

- Welcome
- Ready
- Connect
- Excel
- Protect

Role Summary

General Counsel

About Football Australia

Football Australia (FA) is the national governing body for football in Australia, proudly representing over 2 million participants from more than 200 different cultures. As a member of FIFA, Football Australia governs all national teams, the A-Leagues, Australia Cup, National Premier Leagues, and leads state, community, and grassroots football. Their purpose is to bring communities together through football, connecting Australia to the world. Football Australia strives for Australia to be a leading football nation where everyone is inspired to live and love the game, guided by their values: Welcome, Ready, Connect, Excel, Protect.

About the Role

As a key member of Football Australia's executive leadership team, the General Counsel will strategically lead the legal function across a diverse array of commercial, regulatory, and integrity matters. This role will provide essential support to various Football Australia business units, including National Teams, Competitions, Commercial and Events, Digital, and Community. Serving as a vital strategic advisor to the CEO, the General Counsel will play a pivotal role in driving comprehensive football transformation initiatives. Additionally, the General Counsel will cultivate robust and supportive relationships with all stakeholders, focusing on areas of strategic importance such as partnership and contractual agreements, member registration, and data security.

About You

- You're admitted to practice law in any Australian state or territory, with minimum 10 years post-qualification experience.
- Strategic thinker, team player, strong work ethic, high standards of integrity, excellent communication and problem-solving skills.
- Experience in executive leadership, ideally you will have reporting directly to a CEO previously and demonstrate substantive board-level interactions.
- Strong leadership background preferably inhouse as a General Counsel or potentially within professional services.

For a confidential discussion, please call Robert Atkinson or Alison Myatt of Watermark Search International on 02 9233 1200.

To express interest, please send your application quoting **Ref No A006012** to Watermark Search International at search@watermarksearch.com.au. We will reply to the email address used for your application.

Closing date: 11:59PM AEST on Sunday, 6 July 2025

Job Title	General Counsel
Location	Sydney (Head Office)
Department	Legal & Integrity
Reports To	Chief Executive Officer
Number of Direct Reports	3
Number of Indirect Reports	16

Primary Purpose of the Role

Football Australia's Enduring Growth Principles recognise the strength and diversity of the Australian football family. We are a melting pot of two million participants represented by over 200 different cultures. No other sport within the Australian sporting landscape offers the type of inherent diversity which football does.

As a member of a Football Australia's executive leadership team, the General Counsel will have a strategic role leading the legal function of Football Australia across a range of commercial, regulatory and integrity matters and support various Football Australia business units including National Teams, Competitions, Commercial and Events, Digital, and Community. As an important strategic advisor to the CEO, the General Counsel will play an enabling role in broad and bold football transformation and will foster strong, supportive relationships with all stakeholders on areas of key strategic importance to the business such as partnership and contractual agreements, member registration and data security.

Role Responsibilities

Leadership and Culture

- As an integral member of the Executive Leadership Team, provide thought leadership and contribute to the strategy, planning, and leadership of a changing football landscape;
- Along with Football Australia Executives, drive a culture of High Performance, Inclusion and Diversity;
- Provide critical legal guidance and innovative solutions that drive the organisation forward;
- Align legal and business strategies to enable value creation;
- Optimise legal efficiency and effectiveness to best serve the business;
- Guide legal and regulatory matters for the business, mitigate risk, and protect brand and reputation.

Strategic Initiatives

- In an advisory capacity, develop resources and support Australian football clubs to navigate and operate effectively within the expectations of member safety and standards across the game;
- Lead the implementation of Football Australia's Club Licensing Framework;
- Develop rules in relation to 'access' between competitions;
- Design and establish Football Australia's improved complaint handling process.

Business Affairs

- Responsible for a broad array of commercial contracts spanning both 'business as usual' and complex specialist projects, including those in relation to IT and Digital, professional services, request for tenders/proposals, confidential information, collective bargaining and government funding;
- Advise on contracts and commercial arrangements relating to sponsorship, media and broadcast rights;

- Advise on FA's participation in events, including Australia's participation in all FIFA and AFC tournaments. This includes work ranging from drafting and negotiating agreements related to ticketing, hospitality, security and marketing to negotiating airline charter agreements;
- Act as FA's Privacy Officer, responsible for assessing and responding to privacy queries and liaising with the OAIC and ACMA;
- Advise on FA's content and data strategies and associated privacy compliance issues, including in relation to collection, use, disclosure and storage of customer information (e.g. participant, subscription and ticketing);
- Manage the operation of FA's data breach policy and response plan;
- Act for FA in civil litigation and commercial arbitration matters;
- Lead FA's intellectual property rights management including: prosecuting and maintaining FA's trade mark portfolio; advising on copyright, misleading and deceptive conduct and passing off, including management claims for infringement; advising on FA's brand protection strategy; and managing issues in relation to use of player images;
- Manage the implementation and enforcement of FA policies including those relating to delegated authority, procurement, travel and media;
- Support on employment matters including the hiring and termination of staff, classification and engagement of independent contractors and consultants;
- Assist with procuring various insurance policies for the business, including D&O, management liability, cyber security, travel, public liability and personal accident;
- Conduct legal and compliance training for various internal stakeholders on privacy, social media and safeguarding and member protection.

Regulatory

- Responsible for managing the maintenance of the FA's regulatory framework (e.g. Disciplinary Code, National Registration, Status and Transfer Regulations, National Club Licensing Regulations);
- Responsible for the administration, monitoring and enforcing of league compliance matters including formal notification to Clubs, Players and Officials;
- Responsible for the provision of legal advice and support in connection with the preparation and maintenance of the FA's rules, codes and regulations;
- Responsible for the provision of legal advice and support in connection with the A-Leagues, Australia Cup, National Second Tier, National Premier Leagues including the following duties:
 - (i) match incidents and other competition-related legal matters;
 - (ii) keeping records of all disciplinary matters for competitions;
 - (iii) preparing competition-related disciplinary letters and notifications;
 - (iv) providing legal advice and guidance on competition regulations; and
 - (v) providing legal advice to FA in connection with player status and eligibility issues
- Manage FA's disciplinary function, including carrying out the following duties:
 - (i) managing the secretariat function in support of the FA's judicial bodies and tribunals;
 - (ii) initiating and managing case procedures in accordance with the relevant procedural rules;
 - (iii) carrying out disciplinary investigations;
 - (iv) preparing charge notices, case summaries and other documents;
 - (v) managing meetings and decision-making;
 - (vi) drafting decisions;
 - (vii) communicating decisions to concerned parties (defendants, relevant FA departments, etc.); and
 - (viii) attending and/or coordinating disciplinary matters, including briefing external counsel to appear on behalf of FA
- Act for FA in disciplinary and anti-doping matters including matters before the Court of Arbitration for Sport, FIFA, AFC and FA dispute resolution tribunals

Integrity

- Responsible for management of issues arising under FA's integrity framework, including prevention, monitoring, intelligence and investigations relating to gambling and match fixing, anti-doping, member protection and child safeguarding;
- Responsible for the development and delivery of stakeholder communications and education and in collaboration with state and territory associations as well as national leagues, including the A-Leagues, to maintain the integrity of football in Australia;
- Manage relationships with wagering service providers under FA's Product Fee and Integrity Agreements;
- Lead and assist the management of investigations and hearings initiated under FA's Integrity Framework;
- Monitor and enforce compliance with integrity requirements to safeguard the sport.

Role Outcomes /Deliverables

- Provision of legal support that ensures the efficient operation of the Legal and Integrity Department
- Contribute to strategies identified in the Enduring Growth Principles and FA strategic direction
- Contribute to the achievement of the Legal and Integrity Department's operational goals and standards
- Building and maintaining good relationships and service provision with internal clients and external stakeholders
- Assisting other Football Australia staff to deliver on their responsibilities
- Educating stakeholders regarding the relevant Football Australia, FIFA and AFC statutes

Major Interactions

- FA CEO, ELT and FA Board and Sub-Committees
- Australian Professional Leagues and Clubs
- Professional Footballers Australia
- Member Federations and associated clubs
- Senior Administrative staff of FIFA, AFC, Confederations and National Associations.
- Court of Arbitration for Sport
- Relevant Government Agencies such as Sports Integrity Australia, National Sports Tribunal, Sport Australia

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Essential

- Strategic thinker
- Be a driver of positive workplace culture
- Team player, excellent communicator, ability to think through problems and achieve effective solutions, innovative and constantly seeking better ways of doing things
- Strong work ethic, be flexible and have an ability to juggle numerous tasks under pressure
- Strong attention to detail, high standards of integrity, ability to represent FA interests

Desirable

- Experience as part of an Executive Leadership Team, reporting directly to a CEO and/or with Board reporting responsibilities

Qualifications

Essential

- Admitted as a solicitor in Australia and holding an unrestricted practising certificate
- Minimum 10 years post qualification experience
- Experience in driving change in complex stakeholder environments
- Superior drafting, negotiation and technical skills with the ability to work on a broad range of complex matters
- A solid grounding in intellectual property and contract law, with experience in employment law, insurance, dispute resolution and corporate governance
- Experience working in a fast-paced environment with tight deadlines, excellent organisational skills, multi-tasking and attention to detail
- Ability to effectively manage staff and delegate work within the department

Desirable

- An understanding of the global football regulatory framework
- An understanding of the current reforms to the global football transfer system framework and FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players ('RSTP')
- Understanding of sporting competition regulations and mechanics
- Understanding of the global and domestic sporting landscape
- Experience in and understanding of the operation of domestic sporting tribunals

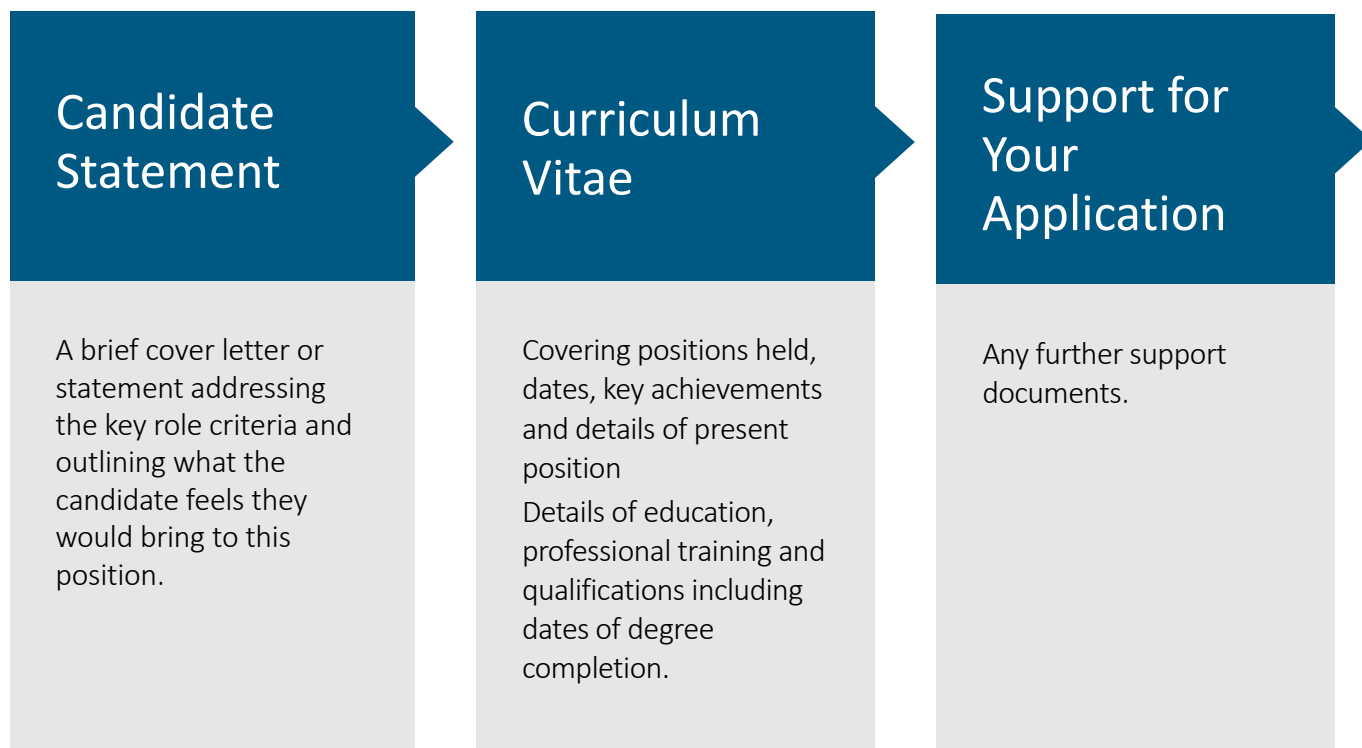
Additional Requirements

- National Police Check
- International Police Check
- Full working rights in Australia
- COVID-19 Vaccination (≥2 doses or medical exemption)
- Driver's Licence

How to Apply

An executive search is being undertaken by Watermark alongside the public advertisement.

Applications for the position will need to include the following:



For a confidential discussion please call Robert Atkinson or Alison Myatt of Watermark Search International, who are leading the search on behalf of Football Australia.

Robert Atkinson

Partner, Executive Search
02 9233 1200

Alison Myatt

Researcher
02 9233 1200

Erin Gillan

Project Administrator
02 9239 1215

Please send your application quoting **Ref No A006012** to Watermark Search International at search@watermarksearch.com.au. We will reply to the email address used for your application.

Closing date: 11:59PM AEST on 6 July 2025.

Our Capabilities



Executive Search

Founded in 1979, we are one of the longest established Australian executive search firms. Even though we are, above all else, an Australian based firm, we have an established track record in attracting and then securing, overseas candidates.

We have considerable expertise in senior executive appointments across a broad range of public and private sector organisations. Our firm has been built on a substantial body of work undertaken for publicly listed companies, private companies, professional services, state owned corporations, government agencies, departments and advisory boards.



Interim Executive

We provide immediate and high-level specialist executives with the experience to bring stability to and provide guardianship for a company during a period of change, executive absence or performance turnaround. We also assist with providing executives who deliver on projects, programs or specialist reviews. When clients are ready to appoint an executive, we normally complete the assignment within two weeks. Our latest survey shows that those executives remain in place for an average of 9 months.



Board Appointments

We believe that strong boards make for better organisations and improved business performance. In conducting searches we do not simply look for 'a name' but rather search for candidates with the relevant skills to add real value to a board. We often start our board search by working with the client to produce a Board Skills Matrix, which then informs the specific brief.

Our track record ensures familiarity with the specific, and often sensitive, challenges involved in appointing Non-Executive Directors and Chairs with the right skill, personal and cultural fit.



Thought Leadership

As thought leaders, we undertake various pieces of research and market analysis to form our Agile Leadership Lessons Podcast, Annual Interim Executive Survey and Board Diversity Index. To view our current reports please [click here](#).

Candidate Care



At Watermark, we recognise we have a duty of care to both our clients and the candidates. As an ambassador for Football Australia, we recognise how important our role is in representing your brand, we take this responsibility seriously and treat successful and unsuccessful applicants with the same level of respect:

- All candidates filtered out before an initial interview are advised in writing.
- Candidates sourced by Watermark are called and given feedback on their performance throughout the selection process; this includes feedback about their experience, knowledge, capabilities and fit for the organisation as well as feedback about their interviewing and presentation techniques.
- Candidates who proceed to client interviews are debriefed and receive feedback either face-to-face or over the phone; this includes feedback as outlined above, plus specific feedback from any notes taken during the interview. We also provide feedback on areas for development such as interview skills, professional development and career guidance.

Candidate Charter



We respect our candidates as individuals and value them as an integral asset to our business. Our focus is on understanding their talents and aspirations and matching them to the right role and organisation. Whether we approach you about a specific role or you contact us to explore opportunities, we want you to experience our commitment to providing a seamlessly professional, constructive, integrity driven service where we care about our engagement with you.

[Association of Executive Search Consultants](#) (AESC) members and their people are guided by a Code of Professional Conduct and Professional Practice Standards.

The AESC Code of Professional Conduct is summarised through these critical values:

- **Ethics & Integrity**
 - We put integrity above all else
- **Excellence**
 - Excellence guides the work we do
- **Objectivity**
 - We exercise independent, objective judgement
- **Diversity & Inclusion**
 - We know the power of diverse talent and inclusive cultures
- **Confidentiality**
 - We safeguard any confidential information entrusted to us

To read the full AESC Code of Professional Conduct, please [click here](#).

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If ever you feel we have not lived up to this Code of Professional Conduct, please tell us. We want to know. Email our Managing Partner at David.Evans@watermarksearch.com.au

Contact Us

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