



# **WATERMARK SEARCH INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATE BRIEF**

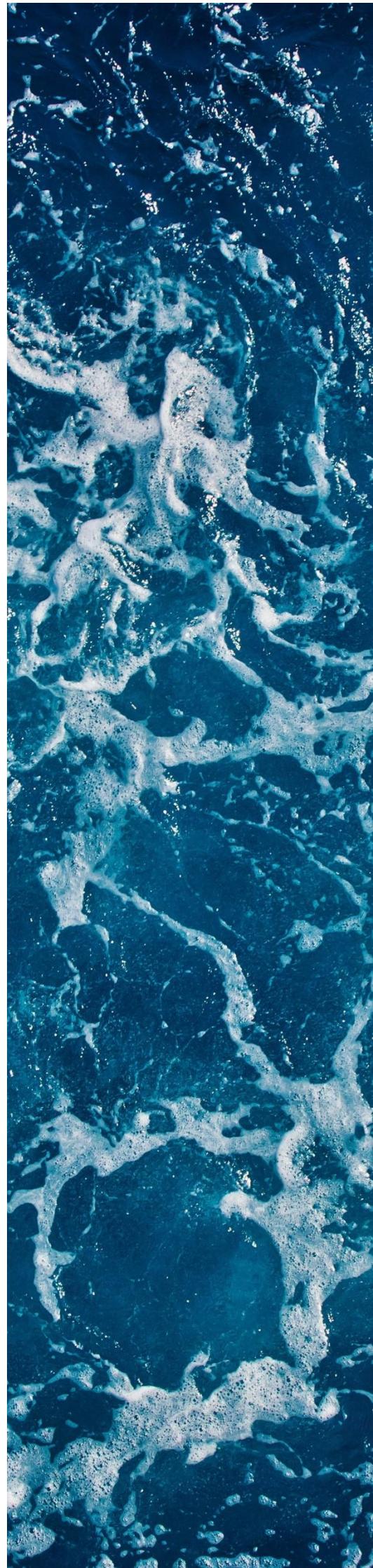
**Chief People Officer**

**Football Australia**

December 2025



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](http://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 (Online Ad)

## Chief People Officer

### About Football Australia

Football Australia (FA) is the national governing body for football in Australia, proudly representing over two 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. With two of the world's most iconic sporting events taking place in 2026, the AFC Women's Asian Cup, hosted in Australia, and the Socceroos taking on the FIFA World Cup it is a career defining moment to join Football Australia and leverage an exceptional strategic people leadership skill-set to create impact that will help shape the future of Football in Australia. FA's 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 its values: Welcome, Ready, Connect, Excel, Protect.

### About the Role

As a critical member of the executive leadership team, driving talent and culture across the organisation, you will play a lead role in driving Football Australia's future workforce and people strategy during a significant period of organisational transformation. This role requires an incredibly passionate leader who can navigate complexity at a compliance, regulatory, and contractual level, including the daily challenges presented by intricate employment contracts and contractor arrangements. Collaborating with the executive leadership team on strategic reforms will form a significant part of your role, together with managing the complete staff lifecycle, developing and driving both visionary and contemporary people initiatives while ensuring the recently launched human resources technology and systems are leveraged by the team to maximise impact. Acting as a sounding board for senior stakeholders, including the Board you will bring authenticity and agility to a dynamic environment where cycles of activity and competing priorities are the norm.

### About You

We are seeking a purpose-driven executive with more than five years' experience leading a people function within a complex organisation. You will be people-centric, practical, and commercial, with high integrity and discretion. A strong negotiator and problem solver, you will have deep practical and solution-based employment relations expertise enabling you to manage complexity and risk effectively. It is essential that you have experience in industrial and employment relations, be independent in decision-making and capable of adjusting to routine tasks and cyclical activities inherent in elite sporting organisations, while maintaining focus on strategic priorities.

For a confidential discussion, please call Tim Haren or Bronwen Kerr of Watermark Search International on 02 9233 1200.

To express interest, please send your application quoting **Ref No A006210** to Watermark Search International at [search@watermarksearch.com.au](mailto:search@watermarksearch.com.au). We will reply to the email address used for your application.

**Closing date: 11:59PM AEDT on Sunday, 18 January 2026**

Job Title	Chief People Officer
Location	Sydney (Head Office)
Department	People Experience
Reports To	Chief Executive Officer
Number of Direct Reports	3

## Primary Purpose of the Role

The Chief People Officer is a pivotal role in shaping our organisational culture and driving our talent strategy. You will oversee all aspects of people experience, including talent acquisition, team engagement, performance management and learning and development. You will work closely with the CEO and Executive Leadership Team to ensure people practices across all operations and locations continually improve and enhance our reputation whilst minimising risk across the organisation.

## Role Responsibilities

### Leadership & Communication

- Provide outstanding counsel and act as a trusted confidante to the CEO and Executive Leadership Team Members on all matters of people, leadership and culture;
- Help a fun, collaborative, engaging and compliant workplace where everyone has a voice, experiences fairness and is treated with respect and care for their wellbeing;
- Manage the complete staff/people lifecycle including but not limited to: performance, pay, recruitment, WHS and return to work, ER and IR activity, engagement, wellbeing, organisational design, immigration, training and development;
- Develop and implement key strategic people initiatives;
- Lead by example in alignment with FA Values;
- Responsible for immigration solutions for international team members;
- Project manage and support the implementation of people technology (Employment Hero) with a regard to effective user experience for team members and managers;
- Providing advice to member federation organisations e.g. Football Victoria, Football Queensland etc. on matters of people experience across the football ecosystem;
- Acting as a representative or spokesperson for people-related matters across FA, including but not limited to, media organisations, Fair Work Commission and Safe Work Australia;
- Conduct or assign staff exit interviews and identify opportunities for improvement.

### Compliance

- Ensure compliance with employment laws, best practices and Football Australia policies;
- Establish fair, compliant and market-comparable industrial and employment practices across all roles;
- Ensure business risks are mitigated and all team members are provided fair and equal opportunities;
- Investigation of reports/disclosures as they relate to people or employment;
- Prepare People Experience reports as required by the CEO or PCRC, including (future) delivery of WGEA Reporting and similar;
- Maintain up to date staff records, database and organisational chart;
- Oversee the return to work and injury management process for work related and personal injuries and illness;
- Maintain immigration compliance across the business;

## Attract, Enable, Grow

- Attract exceptional talent by building our people brand/s and developing initiatives to foster a high performance, rewarding and inclusive environment focused on delivering exceptional work;
- Liaising and engaging with members of the Board on key strategic people initiatives;
- Coach and mentor all Leaders in effective people management, culture building and people practices;
- Support a high-performance culture through continuous performance management and responsive learning and development activities;
- Enable internal mobility across operations to meet current and future talent requirements and deliver robust succession plans;
- Design and facilitate training as required across operations with support of your peers.

## Financial Performance

- Creating and managing the People budget, ensuring cost efficiency in recruitment, training, and employee engagement;
- Monitoring payroll costs, overtime expenses, and benefits to prevent budget overruns;
- Develop a streamlined recruitment strategy to reduce hiring costs;
- Maximising use of People/HR and payroll systems to ensure efficient scheduling, payroll, and compliance tracking and reduce administrative costs.

## *Role Outcomes / Deliverables*

- Delivery of the PCRC Work Plan from Short- and Medium-term initiatives as supported by the November 2024 People & Culture Review and Recommendations.
- Meeting Px budget parameters.
- Positive feedback and engagement with the FA Board, ELT and organisation.

## *Major Interactions*

- All Football Australia departments
- CEO Office and Executive Leadership Team
- Chairperson, Board and People, Culture & Remuneration Committee
- Coaching and football operations staff of the National Teams Unit
- Employment Lawyers, Immigration Lawyers
- Workers Compensation Insurer and Claims Officers
- Domestic and International Media

## *Knowledge, Skills and Experience*

### Essential

- Must be people centric as well as practical and commercial;
- Demonstrate high integrity, confidentiality, tact and discretion in everything you do;
- Ability to plan and manage a workload with ever-changing priorities and still meet tight deadlines;
- Open to new ideas and approaches and always up for innovation and change;
- Strong influencing and negotiation skills and a trusted confidante and advisor to the CEO and Executive Leadership team;

### Desirable

- Experience with Employment Hero (people tech).

## *Qualifications*

### **Essential**

- 5 years in a comparable role as a CPO or Head of People role within an operational capacity in a large business preferably in the sports (or adjacent) industry.
- Passionate or drawn to particular areas of the people space, but a generalist at heart with broad and contemporary knowledge of all things 'people'.

### **Desirable**

- Bachelor of Business (HRM) or relevant degree.

## *Unique Criteria*

The following selected items identify the requirements of the role

- Out of hours and weekend work
- Intra and/ or Interstate travel
- International Travel
- Significant periods of work away from home
- Significant Responsibilities – This does not contain a comprehensive listing of responsibilities, activities and duties that are required of the incumbent. These may change from time to time at the discretion and needs of the manager/organisation

## *Additional Requirements*

To comply with our organisational policies and/ or national and state legislation, the following selected items are requirements of the role

- National Police Check
- International Police Check
- Full working rights in Australia
- COVID-19 Vaccination ( $\geq 2$  doses or medical exemption)
- Driver's Licence
- Working with children check (paid/ employee) or state- based equivalent
- Working with children check (volunteer) or state- based equivalent (volunteer roles only)

## 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:

### Candidate Statement

A brief cover letter or statement addressing the key role criteria and outlining what the candidate feels they would bring to this position

### Curriculum Vitae

Covering positions held, dates, key achievements and details of present position  
Details of education, professional training and qualifications including dates of degree completion.

### Support for Your Application

Any further support documents

For a confidential discussion please call Tim Haren or Bronwen Kerr of Watermark Search International, who are leading the search on behalf of Football Australia.

#### **Tim Haren**

Partner, Executive Search  
02 9233 1200

#### **Bronwen Kerr**

Researcher  
02 9233 1200

#### **Erin Gillan**

Project Administrator  
02 9239 1215

Please send your application quoting **Ref No A006210** to Watermark Search International at [search@watermarksearch.com.au](mailto:search@watermarksearch.com.au). We will reply to the email address used for your application.

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# 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](mailto:David.Evans@watermarksearch.com.au)

## Contact Us

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