

PLAY SOCCER & WORK IN AUSTRALIA



U.S SPORTS
SCHOLARSHIPS





AUSTRALIA





SOCCER IN AUSTRALIA

Tier 1 - A-League

Tier 2 - National Second Division*

Tier 3 - National Premier League

Tier 4 - State league, Premier leagues, Capital leagues

Tier 5 - Amateur leagues

Domestic Cup - Australia Cup

*The National Second Division will commence in 2025 for men's soccer in Australia. Here is a list of clubs who have been accepted into the National Second Division in 2024:

Apia Leichhardt (Sydney)
Avondale FC (Melbourne)
Marconi Stallions (Sydney)
Preston Lions (Melbourne)
South Melbourne (Melbourne)
Sydney Olympic (Sydney)
Sydney United 58 (Sydney)
Wollongong Wolves (Sydney)

The National Premier League, also known as the NPL is a men's national competition which acts as the second tier of the sport in Australia. The NPL is split into eight divisions: ACT NPL, NSW NPL, Northern NSW NPL, Queensland NPL, South Australia NPL, Tasmania NPL, Victoria NPL and Western Australia NPL. The NPL has 94 men's club teams. Under the NPL, we have the State Leagues, Premier Leagues and Capital Leagues. There is promotion & relegation throughout the NPL & State Leagues.

SEMI PRO LEAGUES

Western Australia (Perth)

NPL
State League One
State League Two

Victoria (Melbourne)

NPL
VPL 1
VPL 2
State League One
State League Two
State League Three
State League Four

NSW (Sydney)

NPL
NSW League One
NSW League Two

Northern NSW

NPL 1
Northern League One
NNSW Premier League
NNSW League One

ACT (Canberra)

NPL
Capital Premier League
Capital State League

South Australia (Adelaide)

NPL
State League One
State League Two

Tasmania

NPL
Northern Championship
Southern Championship
Southern League One

Queensland (Brisbane)

NPL
Queensland Premier League

Darwin (Northern Territory)

NorZone Prem League
Central Zone Prem
Southern Zone Prem

AUSTRALIA CUP

The Australia Cup, known as the FFA Cup until the 2021 season, is the national cup competition in Australia. This annual competition is organised by Football Australia, formerly known as Football Federation Australia until 2020.

The Australia Cup includes teams from the A League as well as those from lower tiers in the Australian soccer pyramid. Teams enter in progressive stages, with qualifying rounds taking place before starting with the official Round of 32. Each of the regional or state-based member federation is granted a team allocation for entry into the main competition, joining clubs from A-League Men.

Since the Australian soccer league system provides no promotion and relegation between the first and lower divisions, part of the competition's appeal stems from the fact that it is the only way that A-League Men and lower-tier clubs can play formal competitive matches.

Football Australia will launch the first-ever women's Australia Cup in 2024. The cup will be the first national, multi-tiered knockout competition in any major sport played by women in Australia. It will act as the second qualification spot to the AFC Women's Champions League.

SEASON STRUCTURE

The men's & women's NPL & State League season in Australia will start in February or March, depending on the state you are playing in. The league campaign will finish in August. The season may be extended into September if teams are in a promotion/relegation play off.

2024 men's first round league games & dates

NPL WA – 24th March

NPL VIC – 10th February

NPL NSW – 16th February

NPL Queensland – 23rd February

2024 women's first round league games & dates

NPL WA – 30th March

NPL VIC – 16th March

NPL NSW – 3rd March

NPL Queensland – 10th February

During the season, clubs will train 2-3 nights per week with a match on the weekend.

Most men's clubs will begin pre-season in November for a 4-6 week training block leading into Christmas. All male & female teams and clubs have a two week break for Christmas. All teams at the semi-professional levels will be back in for pre-season the first week of January. Teams typically train 3-4 days per week during pre-season but this varies across Australia.

Your off-season months will be September & October. This may be extended until the first week of January if your club doesn't return until then. This varies but it is very important to maintain fitness levels leading into your pre-season start date. Due to the busy schedule from January - August, the off-season months is a great time to explore Australia. If you take note of our financial plan later in the book, you will be in a great financial position come the end of the season.

VISA RULE

A visa player is any player who is not an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Australia. The NPL has specific rules regarding visa players and each team can only have two visa players on a roster at any one time in the NPL. This rule changes within lower NPL Leagues & State League teams. The visa rule makes it a very competitive market as only two visa players will be selected on an NPL squad. This rule applies to both the men's and women's game.

If a visa player was previously registered with another National Association, the provisions of the FIFA Statutes must be complied with, including the receipt by FA of a valid ITC from that National Association. If you are moving to Australia to sign for a club you will need to get your ITC - International Clearance. Your new club secretary will be able to provide you with all the relevant information needed to complete your ITC.

Some State League competitions such as the WA State League in Perth have no visa rule. This means a State League club can sign as many visa players as they desire. The State league is a very common pathway for visa players to sign for a club before moving into the NPL after a successful season.

This is a very important piece of information as the majority of players reading this ebook will be 'visa players'. To be selected and signed with an NPL club, you will need to demonstrate why you should be one of only two visa players that they can sign. Providing a professional sports CV/Resume and footage highlights will help but some coaches at the NPL level won't sign a player just by reading their CV or viewing their footage. A lot of coaches now want to see players in Australia in a training environment. Due to the large number of visa players playing in the leagues below the NPL, the standard of the leagues are improving and we are finding a lot of NPL clubs now sign their visa players from clubs below.

Make sure to have an open mind and not only focus on NPL contracts. All semi-professional leagues in Australia can offer great conditions and an easier pathway to the NPL if you perform well.

TRANSFER WINDOW



This is a very important period in the Australian soccer calendar for international players either in Australia and looking for a new club or players outside Australia and looking for a move to Australia.

Players can start training at clubs when they return to pre-season between November & January. The transfer window will close at the beginning of February for the NPL. Dates may vary slightly in each state and between the men's and women's game. The best time for players to begin looking for a club in Australia would be between October & January. The earlier the better due to the visa rule which we discussed above. If you arrive in Australia after the transfer window closes, don't worry. Clubs still have options & opportunities to sign players in the NPL or State League. However, we always recommend players arrive as early as possible to give yourself the best opportunity of receiving a contract offer.

There is a mid season transfer window in June for the men's and April for women's teams and is only open for a short period. This year in 2023, the window was open from June 21st-June 28th. If you are looking to sign for a club in the June transfer window, I would begin contacting clubs at the end of May or beginning of June.

Players always have a better chance of receiving a contract offer if they are already in Australia. This gives you the opportunity to train with a club or clubs to showcase your ability. Not all coaches will sign a player from highlight footage & a CV.

ARE GAMES LIVE ONLINE?

NPL games and the majority of State League games are available to watch live online or on repeat after games. This is great for international players playing in Australia as friends/family can watch live from anywhere in the world. It is also very beneficial for players to be able to gather more highlight footage to use as marketing material in the future.

See below the different free websites available to watch each division for both men's and women's.

Youtube – This website is free to use and covers games across the NPL Victoria, NSW, Northern NSW, South Australia and Tasmania

www.streamer.com.au – NPL & State League Western Australia

www.bartvsports.com.au – NPL ACT




CONTRACTS IN AUSTRALIA?

One of the most popular questions we receive from players is regarding contracts. At the NPL level, the majority of players now sign a professional contract. A lot of teams below the NPL will also have players on a professional contract. The majority of clubs will offer a one year contract while some clubs may offer a two year contract. This will be discussed during your negotiations with the club/clubs.

Each contract differs from player to player and club to club. Each club will have their own budget available for the season and it will be up to the coaching staff and club to decide how to manage the budget. Typically, the NSW and Victoria NPL clubs would have a larger budget available to spend on player wages. Wages at the NPL level are not yearly salaries. You will be paid for the duration of the regular season. In most cases, you will only be paid from week one until the last game of the season. Players are not paid during pre-season or for pre-season games. Again, each contract is different and needs to be negotiated by you, your agency and the club. It is normal for clubs to only pay per appearance.

Clubs may make you an offer before you arrive in Australia. Other clubs may invite you for trials once you arrive. Both have their benefits. Some of our players have signed contracts with clubs before arriving in Australia, while others wait until they arrive so they can visit/train at a number of clubs to see what suits them best.

The benefit of having a contract before arriving in Australia is having the security of a soccer contract before ever stepping foot in Australia and it may make the move easier for you. On the other hand, the benefits of waiting until you arrive will give you the opportunity to visit/train at a number of clubs. You will be able to experience the club/team culture, facilities, meet the staff and get a feel for the club before making a decision. You may also receive better offers as the coaches will be able to see you live in action.



Below are a couple of examples of contracts that can be offered to you as a semi-professional footballer in Australia. It is important to understand that the majority of clubs use a win-draw-loss wage structure. If your team wins, you earn X amount, draw X amount and a loss X amount. This is very common at the semi-professional level in Australia. You may also have a wage in your contract with regards to; starting on the bench, coming off the bench, or an unused sub. The majority of players at this level are not paid if they don't play.

Another section of contracts to be negotiated will be wages if you miss a game due to injury or suspension. Some of the top-level semi-professional clubs will offer a wage, other clubs will have it in your contract that you won't be paid for any games missed. This again is very common at the semi-professional level and is important for you to understand when negotiating contracts. It is also important to understand that you will only be paid during the duration of the league campaign.

Players can also receive bonuses or extras within a contract. Examples would be:

- Wages \$100-\$1000+ per game
- Win league bonus
- Signing on bonus
- Goal Bonus
- Clean sheet bonus
- Visa fee payment
- Accommodation
- Flight to Australia
- Vehicle
- Coaching gig within club

Again, it is important to understand that each contract is different and will depend on the level of player and the club involved.

CONTRACT EXAMPLES

MEN'S PLAYERS

Player 1. NPL

- \$500 per win, \$450 per draw \$400 per loss
- \$1000 winning the league bonus
- First month accommodation paid for
- Coaching hours for additional pay if desired
- Assistance with work opportunities

Player 2. State League

- \$400 flat rate per game
- 50% if player starts on the bench
- Accommodation covered for the season

Player 3. State League

- \$300 per game flat rate
- Flight to Australia paid for
- Visa paid for
- Accommodation paid for

Player 4. NPL

- \$1000 per game
- \$50 goal bonus
- \$2000 signing on fee

Player 5. State League

- \$250 per game

*As you can see from the above contracts, offers can vary. We have players on more money and better contracts in the State League. Don't assume all NPL players get better deals.

CONTRACT EXAMPLES

WOMEN'S PLAYERS

Player 1. NPL

- \$200 per win, \$150 per draw \$100 per loss
- First month accommodation paid for
- Coaching hours for additional pay if desired
- Assistance with work opportunities
- Flights to Australia paid for

Player 2. State League

- \$350 flat rate per game
- 50% if player starts on the bench
- Accommodation covered for the season

Player 3. NPL

- \$500 per game flat rate
- Flight to Australia paid for
- Visa paid for
- Accommodation paid for

Player 4. State League

- \$300 per game
- \$50 goal bonus
- \$1500 signing on fee
- Coaching roles

Player 5. State League

- \$200 per game

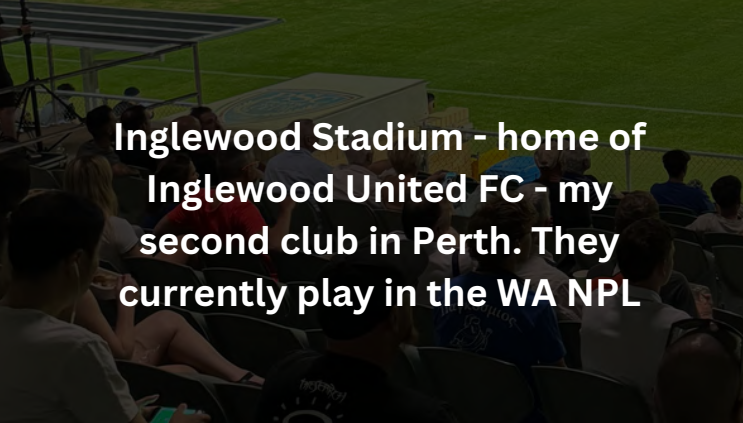
*As you can see from the above contracts, offers can vary. We have players on more money and better contracts in the State League. Don't assume all NPL players get better deals.

FACILITIES

The facilities at the semi-professional level in Australia can vary throughout the leagues. You have clubs at the NPL level with nice stadiums and some clubs with no stadium or stands. You also have the same at the State League level. Clubs do have to meet certain facility requirements which means the majority of clubs have nice facilities and great playing surfaces.



Macedonia Park - home of Stirling Macedonia, my first club in Perth. They currently play in the WA NPL



Inglewood Stadium - home of Inglewood United FC - my second club in Perth. They currently play in the WA NPL



Lakeside Stadium - home of South Melbourne FC. One of the biggest NPL clubs in Melbourne

AUSTRALIA VISA OPTIONS

The most common visa for non-Australian residents to apply for is the Working Holiday Visa (WHV). This is a one-year visa which allows internationals to work and live in Australia for one year. There are currently two Working Holiday Visas to choose from. The country you are from will determine which visa you will apply for. WHV are usually granted within 24-48 hours but this can vary from case to case. Make sure to apply for your visa once you have made the decision to make the move. In some cases a visa can take a couple of weeks or months to be approved. Below we will discuss both Working Holiday Visas and you will also see an example of a WHV grant letter. Once your visa is granted, you should expect to receive this via email or see it in your immigration account. The visa will be attached to your passport, so you don't need to print it out bring it with you. However, it is recommended to bring a copy with you in case you run into any issues at the airport or upon arrival in Australia.

A kangaroo is shown in profile, leaping across a sandy, arid landscape. The background features a range of blue mountains under a clear sky. The kangaroo's body is brown and grey, with its long tail and powerful legs clearly visible as it moves.

WORKING HOLIDAY VISA 417

This visa lets people 18 to 30 years old (or 35 years old for some countries) have their first extended holiday in Australia and work here to help fund their trip.

- Must be 18-30 years old (or 35 years old for some countries)
 - Must have a passport from an eligible country
 - Must not be accompanied by dependent children
 - Stay for 12 months
 - Cost \$635 AUD
- Eligible countries; Ireland, UK, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden.

***New visa for UK holders comes into effect July 2024. See information in the next few pages.**

With this visa, you can work in Australia to help pay for your holiday, study for up to 4 months, travel to and from Australia as many times as you want and allows you undertake 3 months of specific work to become eligible for a second year working holiday visa.

To apply, you can follow the link below. It is all completed online so you won't need to attend any embassy or interviews. The application takes roughly 30 minutes to complete. For the majority of people, the application is accepted and granted within 24 hours. It may take longer depending on what country you are applying from, if you have a criminal record or any medical conditions. You will also need to show proof of funds in your bank account of \$5,000 AUD. At the time of applying if you do not have \$5,000 AUD (This could be around 2,500 in your currency) you will need to ask a parent or family member to transfer you funds so you can take a screenshot and upload a picture of your account. It is highly recommended having at least \$5,000 AUD upon arrival. Later in this ebook we discuss finances so we will provide more information in that chapter.

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/work-holiday-417/first-working-holiday-417>

WORKING HOLIDAY VISA 462

This visa allows people aged between 18 to 30 years old have their first extended holiday in Australia and work here to help fund their trip.

- Must be 18-30 years old
- Must have a passport from an eligible country
- Must not be accompanied by dependent children
 - Stay for 12 months
 - Cost \$635 AUD
- Eligible countries; USA, Argentina, Chile, Poland, Indonesia, Malaysia, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay, Brazil, China, Czech Rep, Ecuador, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Switzerland, Austria

With this visa, you can work in Australia to help pay for your holiday, study for up to 4 months, travel to and from Australia as many times as you want and allows you to undertake 3 months of specific work to become eligible for a second year working holiday visa.

To apply, you can follow the link below. It is all completed online so you won't need to attend any embassy or interviews. The application takes roughly 30 minutes to complete. For the majority of people the application is accepted and granted within 24 hours. It may take longer depending on what country you are applying from, if you have a criminal record or any medical conditions. You will also need to show proof of funds in your bank account of \$5,000 AUD. At the time of applying if you do not have \$5,000 AUD (This could be around 2,500 in your currency) you will need to ask a parent or family member to transfer you funds so you can take a screenshot and upload of picture of your account. It is highly recommended having at least \$5,000 AUD upon arrival. Later in this ebook we discuss finances so we will provide more information in that chapter.

[https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/work-holiday-](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/work-holiday-462)

UK VISA AGREEMENT

This visa lets people 18 to 30 years old (or 35 years old for some countries) have their first extended holiday in Australia and work here to help fund their trip.

Australia and the UK have agreed to put in place new arrangements under the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program and Youth Mobility Scheme following entry into force of the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (Australia-UK FTA).

Under the new arrangements:

- from 1 July 2023, UK passport holders can apply for a Working Holiday visa between the ages of 18 and 35 years inclusive
 - from 1 July 2024, UK passport holders can be granted up to three separate Working Holiday visas without having to meet any specified work requirements.
- The new arrangements will apply to all Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa applications for UK passport holders lodged from the date of implementation.

The eligible age for UK applicants for Working Holiday (subclass 417) visas is currently 18 to 30 years inclusive.

From 1 July 2023, the upper limit will increase to 35 years. From this date, UK passport holders can lodge an application for any Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa until midnight (Australian Eastern Standard Time) on the day before their 36th birthday.

To be eligible for a second or third Working Holiday Visa applicants, must show that they have completed at least three or six months of 'specified work'.

From 1 July 2024, UK passport holders, including those who previously entered Australia on a Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa using a different eligible passport (for example, from the Republic of Ireland), will not have to meet this requirement when applying for a second or third Working Holiday visa on or after this date.

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/whm-program/latest-news/arrangements-uk-passport-holders>

SOCCER COACHING

When players talk to us about playing opportunities, they often ask about coaching work in Australia while playing. Soccer coaching has become very popular in Australia with thousands of children now playing soccer between the ages of 5-18. Not only do clubs have a lot of coaching opportunities but Australia now has hundreds of private coaching academies. If you are interested in coaching, Australia will have a lot to offer.

Arriving in Australia with coaching licenses will give you a massive advantage when looking for a coaching job. If you currently don't hold any coaching licenses, don't worry. You will still have opportunities but may need to apply for some licenses while in Australia. You will also need a National Police Clearance (NPC) and Working with Children Check (WWCC). You can find further information on these online, and can be applied for online or at your local post office.

Please note, coaching jobs in Australia are mainly part-time roles. This might suit you depending on your own financial situation, or you could link coaching with another part-time job while also playing semi-professional soccer.

Many clubs will offer coaching roles when signing a player. When you are in talks with coaches and clubs, make sure to mention your interest in coaching within the club's youth system. This way a club may be able to put together a package for you which includes coaching and playing. A lot of our players are currently on a contract like this.