



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

AV Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy

Project background

For Athletics Victoria (AV), officiating is critical to the success, fairness, and integrity of track & field competition across the state. However, in recent years, challenges include declining numbers of officials, uneven coverage at events, high turnover, and difficulties in recruiting new volunteers.

The creation of AV's first Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy is a collaborative effort with members and the Officials Recruitment & Retention Working Group.

The Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2025-2027 was developed in response to identified challenges to ensure a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive officiating workforce for the future.

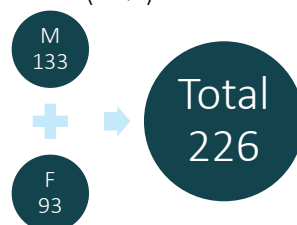
Project objectives

The key objectives of this project were to:

1. Undertake a review of AV's Officials, a critical but vulnerable area, addressing declining participation numbers.
2. Undertake a process to explore what is working, evaluate possibilities, consider risks, and determine key priorities for a future-focused Officials' Strategy.
3. Develop a strategic action plan that focuses on the recruitment and retention of Officials in Athletics to ensure a sustainable workforce.

AV Officials – current state of play

In the 2024/25 season, AV recorded a total of 226 Officials, a decrease of 29 from the season prior. Of the 226 Officials, 133 are male (59%) and 93 are female (41%).



Athletics Victoria Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy

“When thinking about engaging a consultant for our Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy, we identified independence was important for impartial thinking and development, as well as giving it its best chance of being meaningful. Nikki was super organised and clear about what she would do and the outcomes we would get; she more than lived up to her commitments. The result is a pragmatic action plan that avoids jargon, providing straightforward steps that our Officials Working Group can understand easily and get to work on” (Matt Duck, CEO Athletics Victoria).

Project methodology & milestones

A structured approach was undertaken to develop a sophisticated understanding of the strengths and challenges facing officiating. Project activities included:

- Officials Insights Survey.
- Consultation with officials and stakeholders.
- Literature review - baseline data & research on numbers, retention, demographics.
- Strategic framework creation.
- Action plan design with measurable goals for recruitment, retention, training, and recognition.

Four critical success priorities identified

With a vision to create a thriving, vibrant officiating community in athletics to support and develop athletes to be the best they can, the four strategic priorities underpinning this vision are summarised here:

1. **Recruitment** – *first impressions matter.*
2. **Engagement** – *Foster a sense of community, belonging and contribution.*
3. **Retention** – *Enable positive and consistent experiences, with a generous dash of development, and opportunities for progression.*
4. **Recognition** – *say thank you in different ways and often.*

By 2027, the Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy aims to:

- **Increase recruitment** — attract more new officials, particularly from diverse backgrounds (age, gender, location).
- **Improve retention** — retain existing officials through better support, recognition, development, and a positive volunteer experience.
- **Enhance capability and professionalism** — with training, mentoring, and clear pathways.
- **Improve systems and processes** — simplify administration, improve communications and online registration, remove barriers.
- **Foster a culture of recognition and belonging** — ensure officials feel valued, connected, and engaged with AV and their events.

[View AV Officials Recruitment & Retention Strategy](#)

Acknowledgement

Life Sport Journey thanks Athletics Victoria and officials, clubs, members and stakeholders who contributed insights and feedback, helping to shape a sustainable future for officiating.

Contact

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