



**To all Bears Players, Official, Members, Families, Sponsors and Supporters,**

It is with much sadness that I advise that the EDFL Board has made the decision to cancel the 2020 Junior season. Ten days ago the Senior Men's and Women's seasons were also cancelled which means there will be no football at the Bears in 2020 which is a great disappointment.

This decision comes off the announcement by the State Government that Melbourne will re-enter Stage 3 lockdown restrictions due the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst this is disappointing we fully understand the need to protect the health and safety of the wider community.

We would like to thank the EDFL Board for their efforts in trying to run a season in 2020 and understand that the obstacles and difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have made it impossible to do so.

I am sure this a great disappointment to all our players especially those waiting to play their first games or milestone games this year.

The COVID-19 crisis has caused delay after delay and provided clubs with many challenges over the past few months and I would like to thank all at the Bears who have worked so diligently to ensure our club had every chance to play in 2020. Whilst the complexities of all the protocols and compliance was difficult it was something that our Committee and Coaches worked incredibly hard to ensure we could manage and provide a safe environment for our players and families. Whilst being compliant meant additional costs for our club that was done without hesitation.

As I have stated repeatedly the club has always followed the direction and advice from AFL Victoria and the Victorian Chief Health Officer.

The easy option would have been to give up and walk away however I am proud to say that our 'Bearforce' did everything possible to put our club in a safe position to train and play. The health and safety of our players and families has always be paramount but we were also mindful of the physical well being and mental health of our players. Over the past month almost 400 players had attended training sessions which showed the desire of our teams to play footy in 2020.



Thank you to all our Coaches for their efforts both over the pre-season and the COVID-19 months, your commitment has been second to none. Thanks also to all our players who adhered to the additional protocols without issue and also for their efforts in trying to bring success to our club in 2020.

But of course a big thank you to our hard working Committee for their dedication to our club in putting us in the best position possible. There has been countless messages, phone calls and meetings over the course of the past few months and everyone has been positive in very trying times to do the best thing possible for benefit our club and its members.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our fantastic sponsors for their support during these difficult times. We are very fortunate to have such supportive sponsors and we look forward to maintaining a strong relationship with you over the coming years.

The club will now begin to work on refunds or credits for next year in regards to Registration fees paid in 2020 and we plan to provide some initial communication on this to members later this week as we work through this process.

2020 has become an extremely challenging and disappointing season however we now look towards 2021 where the Bears will be celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> year. Let's hope we get to see some footy as I for one can't wait to see our Bears back in action.

Go Bears!

**Justin Peagram**  
President  
Burnside Heights Football Club