



# COMPETITION STRUCTURE 2013 AND BEYOND



## *Information Guide*

Released Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011

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## Introduction

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As you are aware, over the past two years the Board and staff of Hockey Victoria (**HV**) have been consulting with affiliates to ascertain their views on the current competition structure and to identify options for improvement.

Various discussion forums have been conducted and many affiliates have submitted written recommendations for our consideration. A summary of the focus group recommendations was published in June 2010.

In July 2010, we engaged Shape Research, a not-for-profit sports research company, to conduct a formal review of the current competition structure and evaluate these structures against those adopted in other sports and also across other hockey associations within Australia. A key component of this research project involved the construction of a survey which 1,200 people completed in August 2010 providing us with some extremely valuable research data.

The review aimed to investigate:

- How the structure of the competition can be improved to promote growth in participation numbers within the sport;
- How the structure of the competition can be improved to increase the standard of, and access to, the elite competition for all affiliates and reward clubs with strong junior participation programs by providing a clearer pathway to our elite competition;
- How the competition structures can be improved to lessen the impact of travel on those participants whose main motivation is a balance of quality competition with user-friendly access to the sport;
- How the competition can be structured to improve the ability to attract and retain umpires; and
- How the competition can be structured to make it more accessible to casual participants, taking into account the trend for individuals to have less time for social/sporting activities.

Shape Research presented the recommendations of the Competition Structure Review to the HV Board at a Board Meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

Following the presentation and discussion, the HV Board resolved to further consider the recommendations contained in the final report at the Board Meeting to be held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010 once they had received a report and further information from management.

The final report from Shape Research, based on the research and feedback from the member survey, clearly identified that our competitions are not in need of an urgent radical restructure but the report did highlight that several opportunities exist to build on the growth, sport development outcomes, club and competition strength and engagement with our affiliates which will provide a more stable and sustainable competition better aligned with HV's wider strategic objectives.

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010, a memo was distributed to all affiliates which advised that the Board and management resolved that there would not be any significant changes to the HV competition structures for the 2011 season. Any recommended changes, once they have been endorsed by the Board, will only come into effect at the end of the 2012 season for commencement in the 2013 season. This message was repeated at the Presidents' Meeting in November 2010 and the 2010 Annual General Meeting which was held on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

**The purpose of this *Competition Structure Information Guide* is to outline to all affiliates the changes which will be implemented for the 2013 season and the rationale behind these changes.**

Long term sustainability, strength and growth in our competition structures are the fundamental objectives and if any of these principles are compromised in the implementation of the new competition structure then the Board and management reserve the right to modify the strategies and implementation schedule at any time.

The Board and management of HV strongly believe that the proposed competition structure is the right structure over the medium term as it addresses more fully the differing needs of our participants, the desire to build and strengthen our elite competitions and pipeline into national teams.

# Summary of Current Structure

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The **Competition Structure Review** identified the following strengths, weaknesses and opportunities with the **current** HV competition structure:

## Strengths

- Settled, long standing, competition structure
- Allows all Victorian clubs an avenue to participate in the upper tier of the structure
- Incorporates regional teams in top competitive leagues in the State
- Presence and accessibility of online results and fixtures
- Ample opportunities to find a suitable playing level
- Similar structured men's and women's competition systems
- Number of team entries is relatively consistent from 2004-09
- HV has the control of the majority of state competitions instead of multiple associations which is the case in other States
- 88% of survey respondents are satisfied with the current timeframe of the competition
- 68% of survey respondents are satisfied with the current structure of the competition
- 71% of survey respondents are satisfied with the current finals fixturing

## Weaknesses

- The standard falls away quickly in lower State Leagues (great disparity within current 'State League' structure)
- Diagrammatic representation of structure is not representative of different standards of competition
- Bottle necks in promotion pathways in some areas (e.g. Metro into Pennant Structures)
- Too much variance in the times and days of weekend matches (hard to schedule work/family time)
- Too many games at SHNC (at expense of Club Days)
- Routing / Too much Player transfer / Loss of juniors to SL clubs
- Success built on player movement rather than retention and development

- Clubs arbitrarily determine the structure of their teams across the leagues – Elite / Development / Social and with variances of club policies the current competition often has teams with very different aims participating in the same grade
- Structure is breeding increased disparity (Strong clubs get stronger, weak get weaker)
- Limited opportunities to be an elite club (limit of 10 clubs in State League 1)
- Limited support for 6.30pm games
- Limited opportunities for 35-40 year old males in the sport (veterans ages for men vary across Australia)
- Lack of Umpires
- Limited motivation or enforced criteria for clubs to engage in sport development (youth, grass roots, umpire development)

## **Identified Opportunities and Enhancements**

### **Elite and Sub-Elite Competition Design**

- Expand top tier competition(s) to enhance opportunities for more clubs to become elite clubs
- Organise competition around distinct levels: Elite, Development & Social
- Properly define League-led Elite, Sub Elite, Development and Social levels of competitions. At present the clubs self-determine which teams they field are Development & Social
- Have 1st and 2nd team play together more consistently / Have Men and Women teams player together more consistently
- Lock step seniors and reserves for each club
- Maintain SHNC days but consider league wide days (and less of them)
- Have grades play on certain (consistent) days to allow players to better plan weekends

### **Club Development**

- Expand top tier competition(s) to enhance opportunities for more clubs to become elite clubs
- Formalise a reserve level competition within the elite structure to increase the playing base and pathways within clubs
- Provide more opportunities for club days

- Provide motivation for clubs to make greater contribution to sport (Incentivize Sport Development Outcomes)
- Provide Sport Development criteria / incentives for clubs to assist with the facilitation of umpire, coach and junior development programs
- Maximise participation opportunities

### **Social and Overage / Veterans / Masters**

- Consider mid week Ladies competition during the day
- Reduce travel for umpires and players at lower levels
- Weeknight competitions (Social)
- Men's Veterans competition to include 35-40 year olds as well (and possible 60s Age competition)
- Social Midweek competition (considering the impact on Metro weekend competition)
- Maximise Participation opportunities

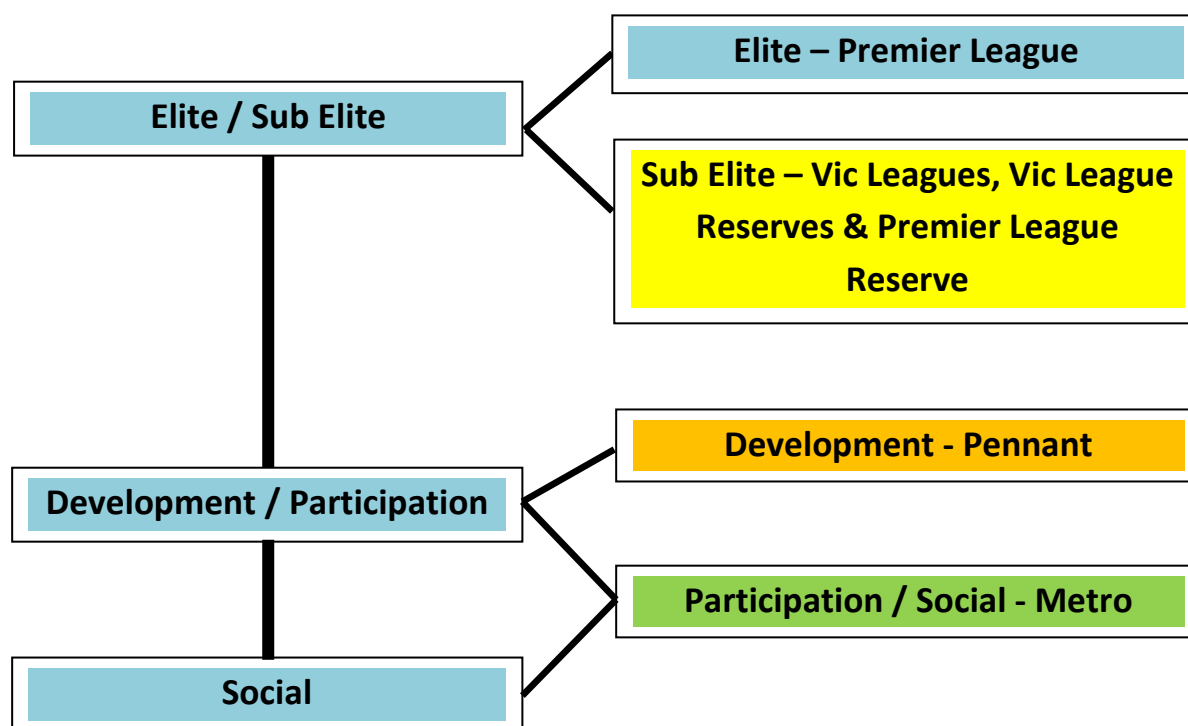
### **Sport Development (Juniors / Pathways / Umpires / Coaches)**

- Consider shorter U/9 and U/11 seasons
- Include SL players in Junior Development sessions
- Introduce U18 or U19 competitions (align or link top junior teams to premier and state league structures)
- Reduce travel for umpires and players at lower levels
- Align with existing school, state and national representative structures

## Summary of Key Recommendations

The **Competitions Structure Review** made the following key recommendations:

- A **three tier** structure with better defined Elite/Sub-Elite, Development/Participation and Social levels of competition



- Each Victorian affiliate will have the opportunity to have a single senior and a reserves team in the elite/sub-elite competition (in line with other sports) to better define and grow the elite player base in clubs
- Increase the size of elite leagues (Premier League and Vic League 1) to 12 teams
- Rebranding of a single 'Premier League' as the elite Men's and Women's Hockey product in Victoria
- 96 teams are represented at the elite level in men's and women's competitions with opportunities to align U/17 or U/18 competition in the future

## Summary of Key Recommendations (continued)

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- League entry criteria integrated to encourage clubs to engage in the development of Hockey. For example, clubs at various levels may be required to:
  - field reserve side
  - have a minimum number of junior teams
  - have planned or proven records of development of coaches/umpires
  - develop a strategic club plan based on a HV template

*Note: such criteria will increase given the level of club (For example Premier League and Vic League 1 clubs will have more rigorous criteria than Vic League 2 clubs to promote increasing development across as all aspects of the club rather than maintain a focus only on elite level performance).*

- Opportunities to maximise club days are optimised
- Pennant Leagues (Development) become the feeder system for the elite/sub elite structure for all clubs but remain largely unchanged in structure but smaller in size
- Metro Leagues become the participation or social competitions but there is still provision for promotion into the Pennant (Development) level of competition.

Refer to **Appendix I** for a summary of the key opportunities and solutions identified in the Competition Structure Review.

## Information Session

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HV will facilitate an Information Session so that all affiliates have the opportunity to seek further clarification on the implementation of the new competition structure in 2013.

The details for this Information Session are as follows:

Date: **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

Venue: Hockey Olympians Room, State Netball Hockey Centre, Parkville

Time: 6.00pm for a 6.30pm start. 6.30pm - 8.30pm

## Requests for Further Information

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If an HV affiliate requires any further information on the new competition structure, then the Club or Association **President** must submit these requests in writing to HV before the close of business on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011**.

The HV office will collate these requests and provide responses in the Information Session to be held at the State Netball Hockey Centre on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

Email: **[admin@hockeyvictoria.org.au](mailto:admin@hockeyvictoria.org.au)**

Note: Requests for further information will not be accepted if they are not in writing and submitted to the above email address by the Club or Association President.

# New Competition Structure

## Elite / Sub Elite Premier League & Vic League Competitions

From the commencement of the **2013** season:

- the current State League 1 competition will be expanded to a **12 team** competition to be known as '**Premier League**'.
- the '**Premier League**' and all **State League** competitions will have a **Reserves** team.

Refer to the following section for a detailed explanation on how the Reserves structure will work.

### CURRENT

State League 1  
10 Teams



### 2013

Premier League  
12 Teams

Premier League Reserves  
12 Teams

- the current State League 2 competition will be expanded to a **12 team** competition to be known as '**Vic League 1**'.

### CURRENT

State League 2  
10 Teams



### 2013

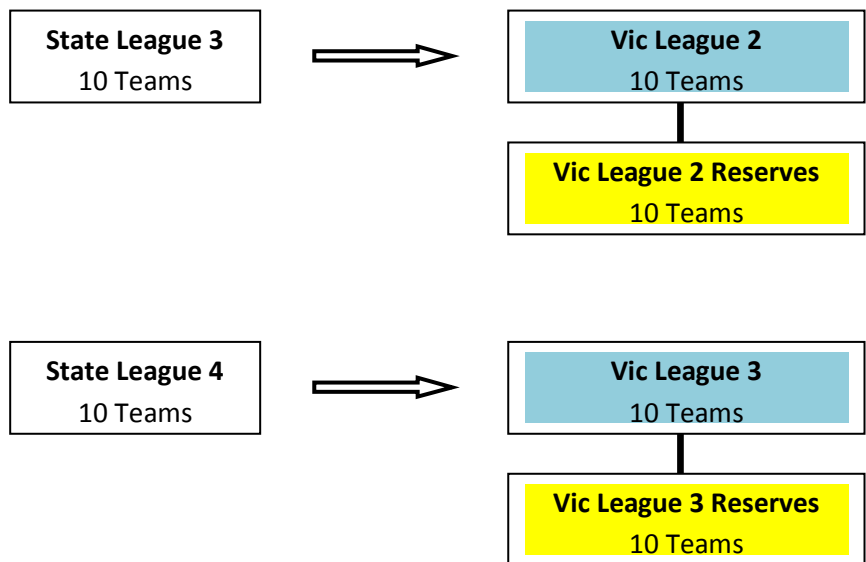
Vic League 1  
12 Teams

Vic League 1 Reserves  
12 Teams

- the State League 3 & 4 competitions will remain as **10 team** competitions to be known as **‘Vic League 2 and Vic League 3’**.

**CURRENT**

**2013**



- the Men’s State League 5 competition (Vic League 4) will only be required if there are sufficient number of affiliates entering their first team in the HV competition.

The ‘rebranding’ of the State League 1 competition presents HV with opportunities to market and commercialise this expanded elite competition and we will commence the process of discussing the sponsorship and media opportunities with various organisations.

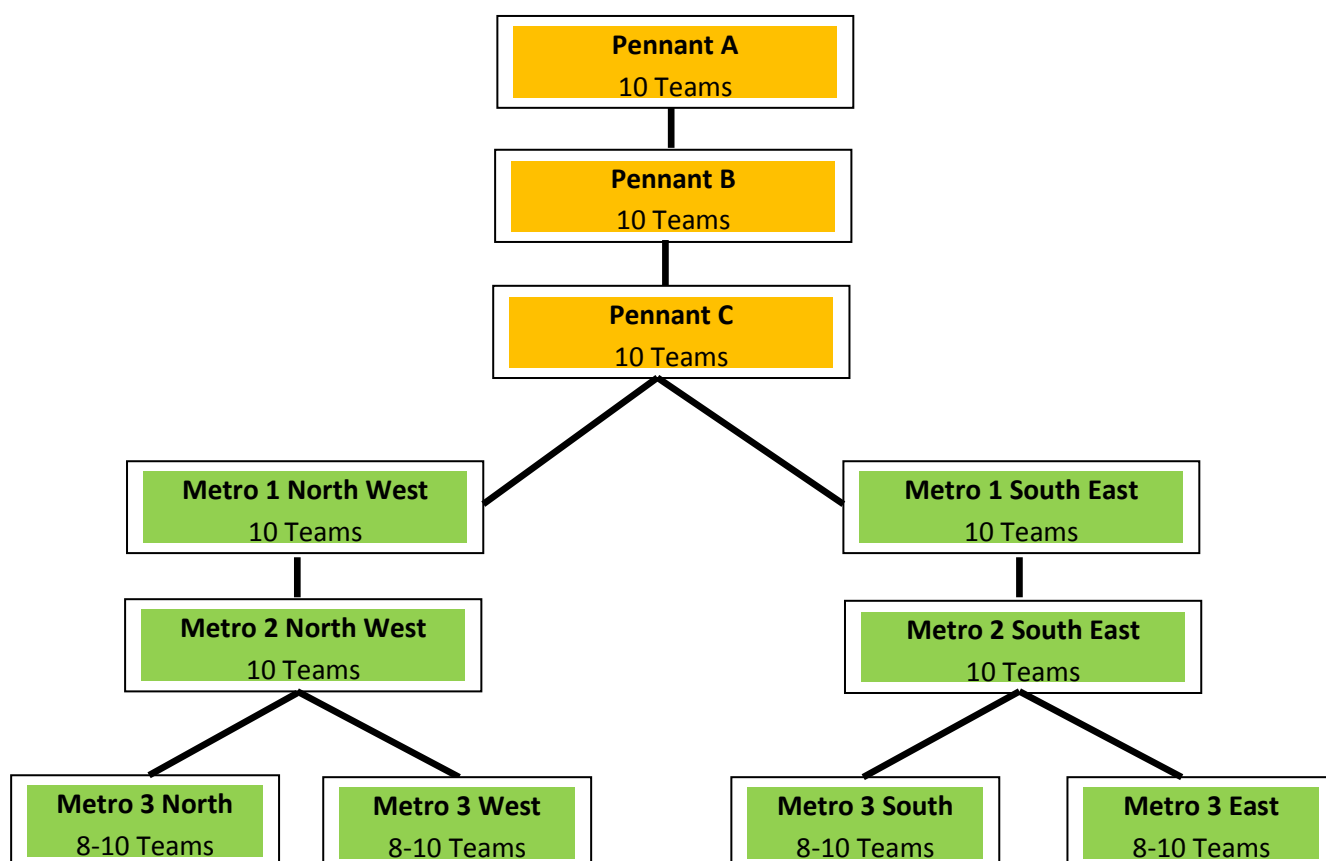
**Development**

**Pennant Competitions**

**Participation & Social**

**Metro Competitions**

**Men**



Affiliates who do not have a team entered in the Premier League or Vic League (Elite & Sub Elite) competitions will be permitted to enter a team in the lowest grade of the Pennant C (Development) competition at the sole discretion of HV.

Affiliates in the Metro (Participation & Social) competitions may elect to decline promotion and remain in the various Metro (Participation & Social) grades of competition. A pathway will still be provided for Metro teams to progress into the Pennant competitions if they wish.

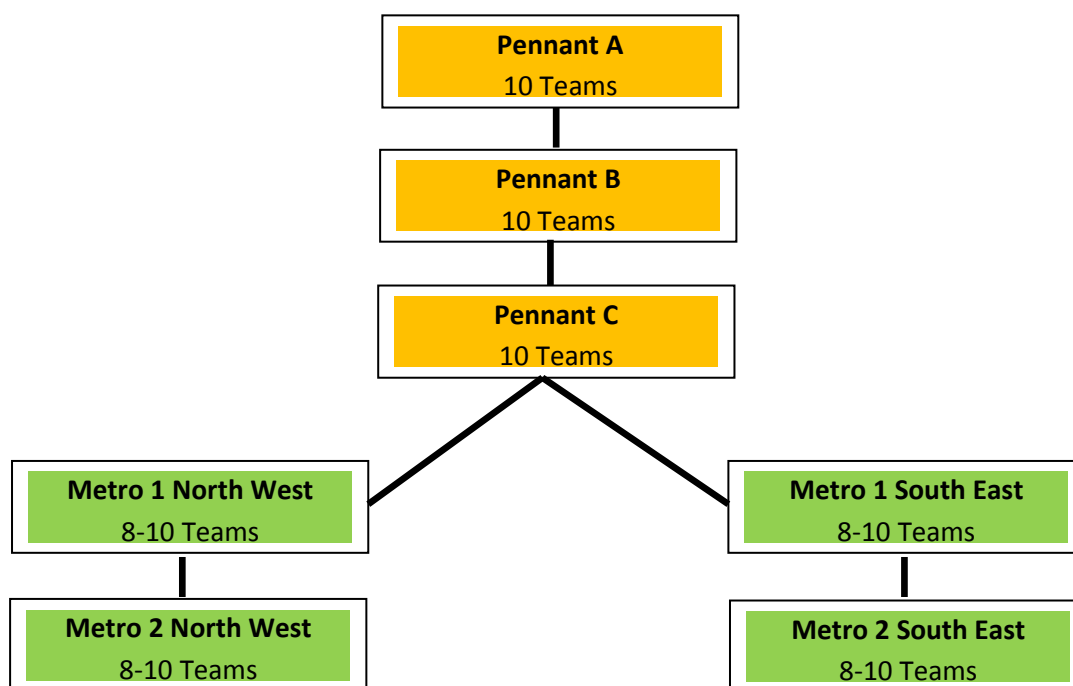
**Development**

**Participation & Social**

**Pennant Competitions**

**Metro Competitions**

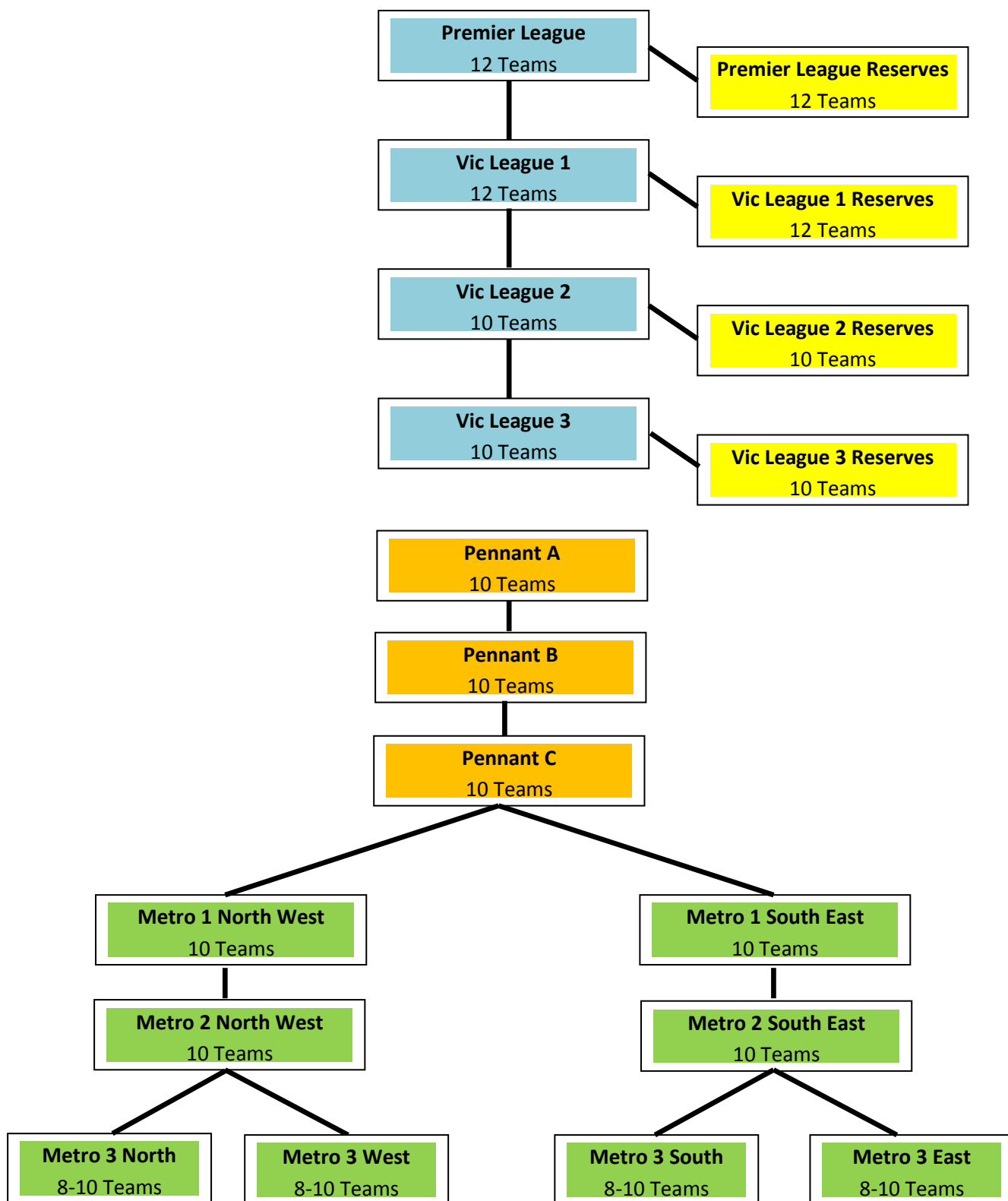
**Women**



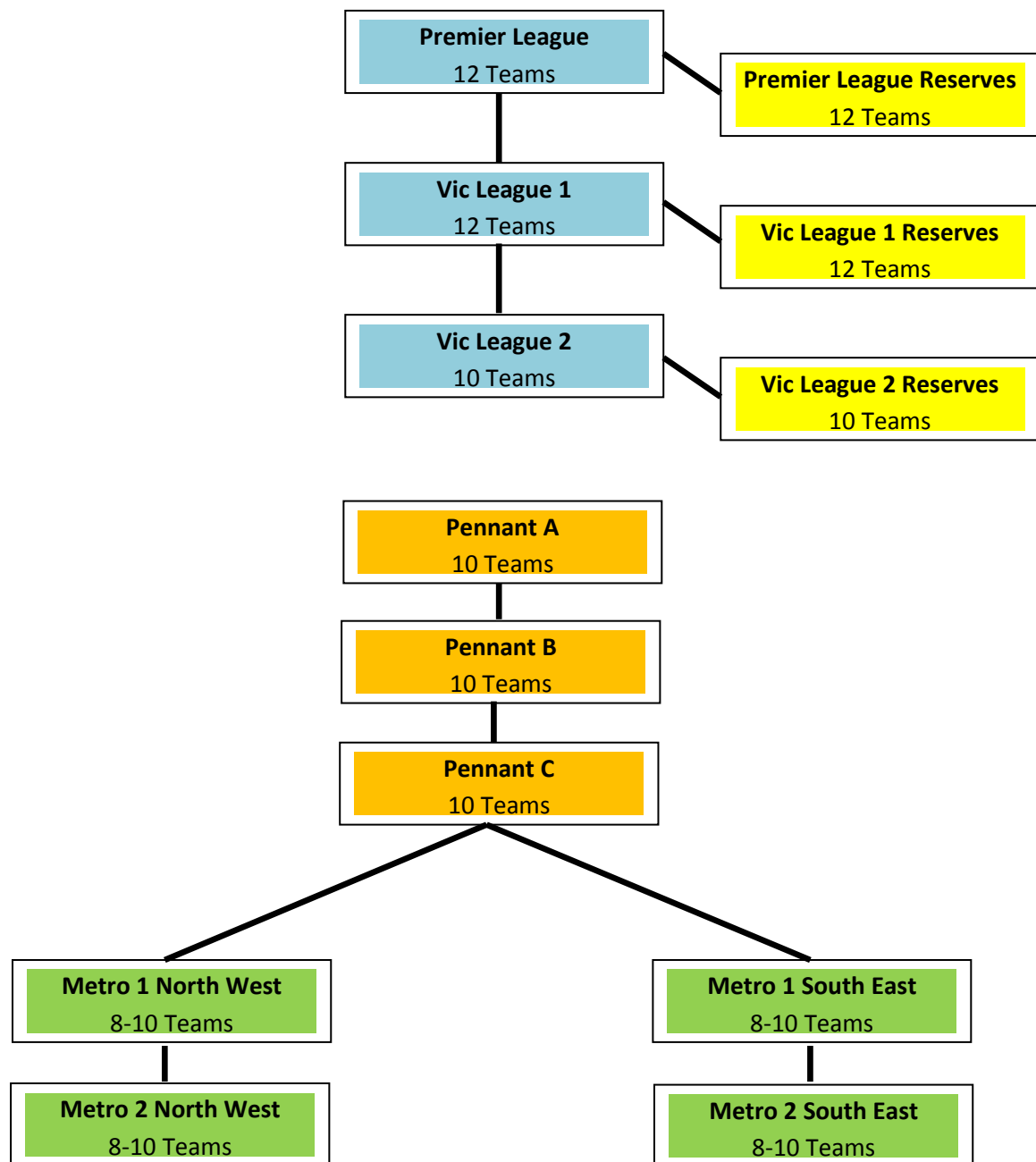
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Affiliates in the Metro (Participation & Social) competitions may elect to decline promotion and remain in the various Metro (Participation & Social) grades of competition. A pathway will still be provided for Metro teams to progress into the Pennant competitions if they wish.

## Men's Competition Structure Overview



## Women's Competition Structure Overview



# How will the 'Reserves' structure work?

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## Premier League & Vic League Reserves

From the commencement of the 2013 season, each Premier League and Vic League team will also have a Reserves team. Both competitions will have a total of **12 teams** for both the men's and women's competitions.

The purpose of establishing this linked Reserves structure is so that clubs develop and retain a larger 'squad' of approximately 30 players that can compete at this elite level of competition rather than focussing on potentially 15 athletes.

The linking of a Reserves grade will also assist with match scheduling because every club entered in these two competitions will be able to have their top two teams aligned.

The Reserve structure is a formalised system for the artificial reserves structure that we already have in place with our State League and Pennant grades but the alignment is distorted when, for example, a SL1 club has a Pennant B or Pennant C team as their second side or a SL3/SL4 club's second team is competing in the Metro 3 or 4 competitions. These disparities will be eliminated under the Reserves structure to be introduced in 2013.

## Other Grades

Apart from the Premier League and Vic League competitions in the Elite/Sub Elite competitions, all grades in the Development/Participation competitions (Pennant & Metro) will **not** have a reserves structure attached to their competition.

## Introduction

From the commencement of the 2013 season, each Premier League and Vic League elite team will be required to have a Reserves team.

Affiliates participating in the Premier League and Vic League competitions will have their second's team removed from either the Pennant or Metro competitions and these teams will be allocated into the linked Reserves team competition for either their Premier League or Vic League team.

### Concession (2013 & 2014)

If a regional affiliate (for example Hockey Albury Wodonga, West Vic and CV Blazers) are unable to field a Reserves team in season 2013 or 2014 then a bye will be created in the relevant Reserves competition for these seasons.

### Compulsory (2015)

It will be **compulsory** from the commencement of 2015 for all Premier League and Vic League clubs to enter a Reserves team. If a club is unable to field a Reserves team then they forfeit their right to play in either the Premier League or Vic League competitions and a place will be made available in the Pennant (Development) level of our competition structure.

## League Entry Criteria

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All affiliates participating in the Premier League and Vic League elite and sub elite competitions will be required to meet selected entry criteria in order for their team to be sanctioned in the elite and sub elite competitions.

Hockey Victoria will work collaboratively with all affiliates in order to assist them in progressively achieving these criteria. Templates for all policy document requirements and examples of best practice programs will be provided to all affiliates as guides only.

The entry criteria will be phased in over a number of years.

### Premier League and Vic League I

By the start of the **2013** season, it will be **compulsory** for all **Premier League** and **Vic League I** clubs to satisfy the following criteria:

- Clubs to provide HV with an updated copy of their Strategic Plan which covers the period 2013 to 2015 as a minimum;
- Clubs to provide HV with a copy of their Development Plan which details the strategies for player recruitment and development;
- Clubs to provide HV with a copy of their Codes of Behaviour and Member Protection Policies;
- Clubs need to provide satisfactory evidence that they have a Junior Development Program, including an HV's approved Hookin2Hockey program and that the Junior Development Program aligns with Hockey Victoria's and Hockey Australia's Game Development priorities;
- Clubs need to be working closely with HV to ensure that coaches and umpires within the Club have attained the necessary accreditation through the HockeyEd Program (in accordance with HV's Umpire & Coach Development Policy);
- Clubs must provide HV with a copy of their Facility Master Plan which details the Clubs strategies for the development and/or improvement of facilities at their Club and the associated timelines for these works.

By the start of the **2015** season, it will be **compulsory** for all **Premier League** and **Vic League I** clubs to satisfy the following **additional** criteria:

- Clubs need to have a minimum of three (3) junior teams entered in either the HV Underage Competition (U9, U11, U13, U15 or U17) or a regional affiliate's local junior competition.
- Clubs need to be working closely with HV to ensure that all Premier League and Vic League Coaches and Assistant Coaches have a minimum of Development Level coaching accreditation through the HockeyEd Program (in accordance with HV's Coach Development Policy); and
- Clubs need to work closely with HV to ensure that the Club has the minimum number of Umpires (Officials) within the Club that have attained the required level of accreditation through the HockeyEd Program (in accordance with HV's Umpire Development Policy).

### **Vic League 2 & Vic League 3**

It is HV's ambition that the clubs participating in the Vic League 2 and Vic League 3 competitions will work hard to **progressively** achieve the same criteria as outlined above for the Premier League and Vic League I competitions in order to achieve sustained development and success at this sub elite level and in preparation for the transition into the elite level of competition.

Promotion into the Vic League I competition is dependent on the above criteria being satisfied.

## How many teams will there be in each grade?

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### Premier League & Vic League I

From the commencement of the 2013 season, the Premier League, Premier League Reserves, Vic League I and Vic League I Reserves competitions will have a total of **12 teams** for both the men's and women's competitions.

### Other Grades

All other grades will have a total of **10 teams** in the competition however this number will be reviewed depending on the number of new entries at each competition entry level.

### 2015 and Beyond

The Premier League, Premier League Reserves and Vic League I and Vic League I Reserves competitions will remain 12 team competitions for both the men's and women's competitions until at least the 2015 season when an audit review will be conducted to assess the competition over the 2013 and 2014 seasons.

## How will promotion and relegation work?

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The Competition Structure Review investigated many models of promotion and relegation from a variety of sports and also from State & Territory hockey competitions within Australia. These models included: a challenge system, teams applying for promotion or relegation, a weighted combination of results, round robin playoffs, playoffs between a top 6 and bottom 6, etc.

There are a plethora of innovative promotion and relegation systems that are utilised across different sports and a decision was made to ensure that the model selected was simple to understand and aligned with the core objectives of the Competition Structure Review.

Central to the decision of the promotion and relegation model was the strong desire to reduce the 'yo-yo' effect of clubs being promoted from State League 2 into the State League 1 only to be demoted at the end of the season. It can be extremely demoralising and frustrating for clubs who spend an enormous amount of energy and resources into developing their club players. The on-going challenge of retaining and/or attracting new players and coaching personnel to your club is complex and there is no doubt that this task is made harder when the club's top team is in State League 2 or lower.

### Promotion at the end of the 2012 season

#### State League 1 & 2

At the conclusion of the 2012 season:

- there will be **no** relegation from the State League 1 and State League 2 competitions.
- the State League 2 Minor Premier and the Winner of the State League 2 Grand Final (or the second team on the ladder at the end of the 18 round home and away season if the winner of the Grand Final is also the Minor Premier) will be promoted from the State League 2 competition to the 2013 Premier League competition to make up the new 12 team competition.
- the top four (4) State League 3 teams will be promoted from the State League 3 competition to the 2013 Vic League 1 competition to make up the new 12 team competition.

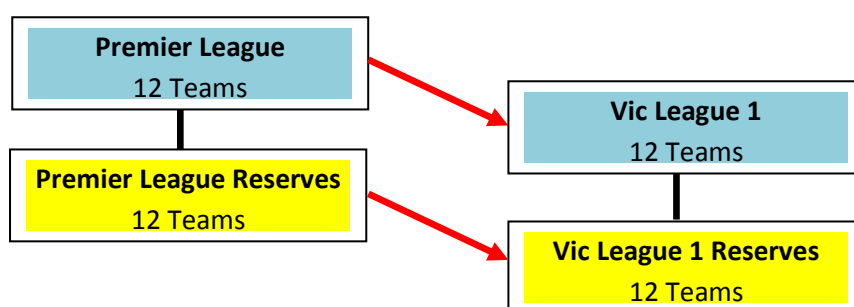
## Promotion and Relegation from 2013 onwards

### Premier League Relegation

When the Premier League competition commences in 2013 there will only be **one** team **relegated** from the Premier League competition to the Vic League I competition.

This will be the team that finishes in **12<sup>th</sup> position** at the end of the 18 round home and away season.

This team's Premier League Reserves team will also be **relegated** to the Vic League I Reserves competition.

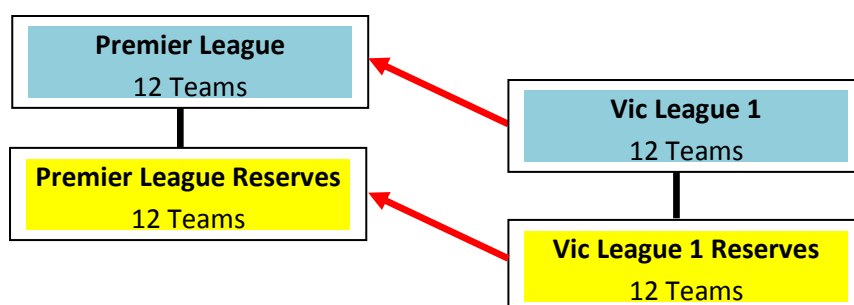


### Vic League I Promotion

When the Vic League I competition commences in 2013 there will only be **one** team **promoted** from the Vic League I competition to the Premier League competition at the end of the season.

This will be the team that finishes in **1<sup>st</sup> position** at the end of the 18 round home and away season (the **Minor Premier**).

This team's Vic League I Reserves team will also be **promoted** to the Premier League I Reserves competition.

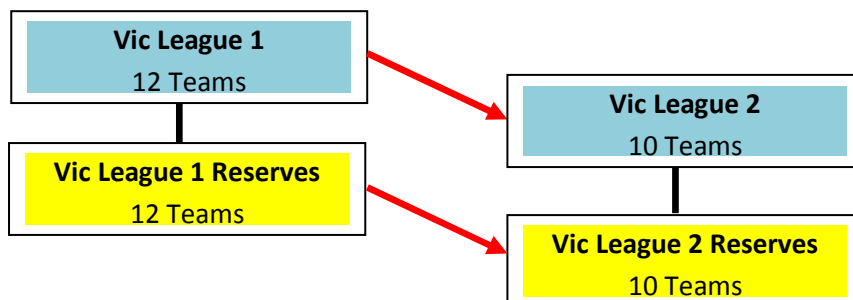


## Vic League 1 Relegation

When the Vic League 1 competition commences in 2013 there will be **two** teams **relegated** from the Vic League 1 competition to the Vic League 2 competition at the end of the season.

These will be the teams that finish in **11<sup>th</sup>** and **12<sup>th</sup>** **position** at the end of the 18 round home and away season.

These team's Vic League 1 Reserves teams will also be **relegated** to the Vic League 2 Reserves competition.

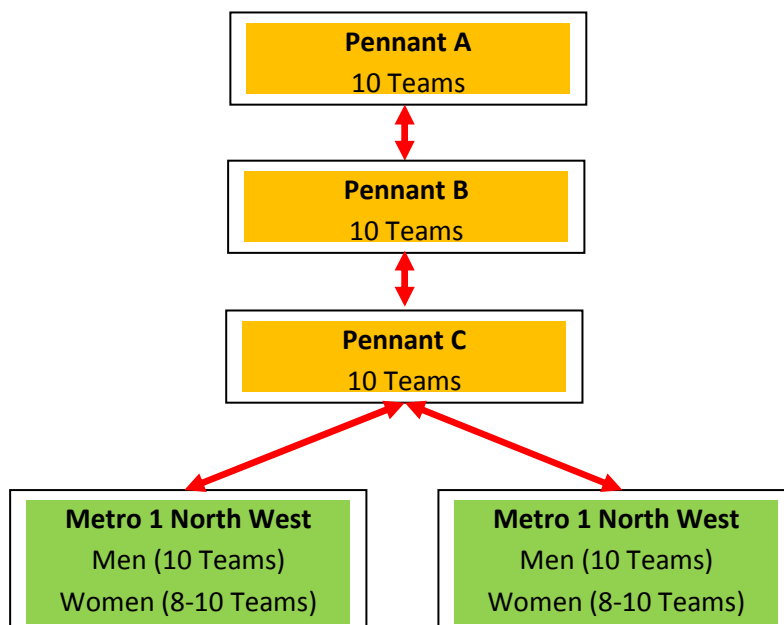


## Other Grades

### Pennant Competition

The traditional two-up and two-down promotion and relegation model will remain for the Pennant grades.

The Minor Premier and winner of the Grand Final (or the second team on the ladder at the end of the 18 round home and away season if the winner of the Grand Final is also the Minor Premier) will be promoted the following year and the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> placed teams will be relegated.



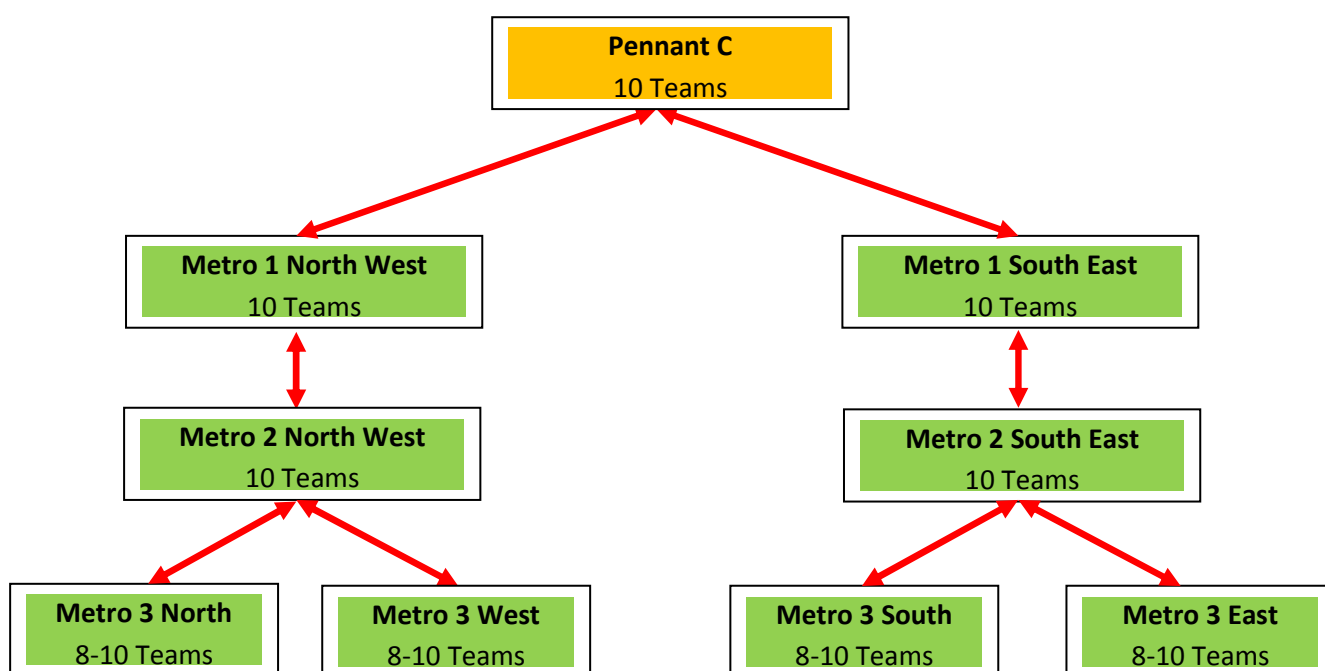
## Men's Metro Competition

At the end of the season, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> placed teams in the **Men's Metro 1** North/West and South/East competitions will be relegated to the Men's Metro 2 North/West and South/East competitions.

The Minor Premier and winner of the Grand Final (or the second team on the ladder at the end of the 18 round home and away season if the winner of the Grand Final is also the Minor Premier) from the Men's Metro 2 North/West and South/East competitions will be promoted the following year into the Men's Metro 1 North/West and South/East competitions.

At the end of the season, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> placed teams in the **Men's Metro 2** North/West and South/East competitions will be relegated to the Men's Metro 3 North and West and South and East competitions respectively.

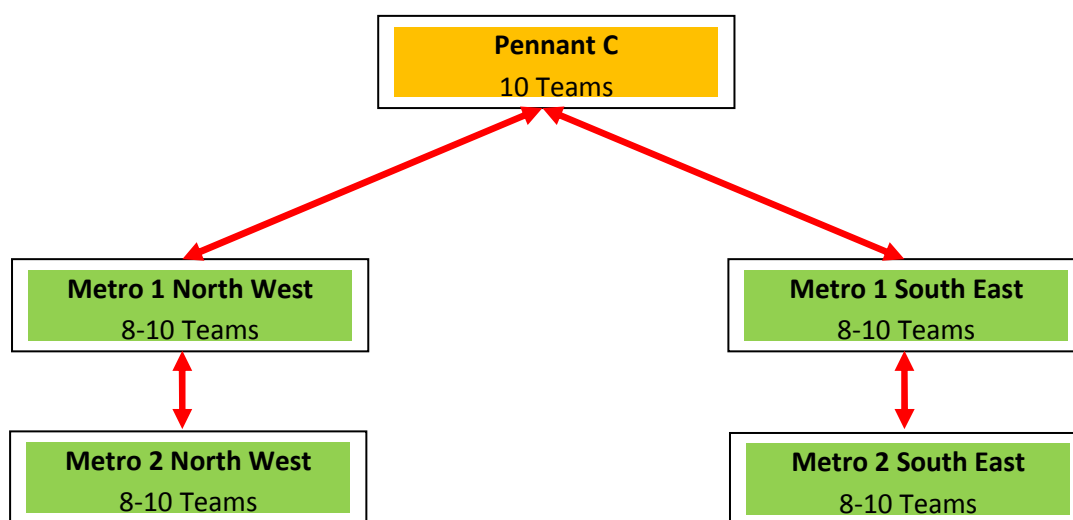
The Minor Premier only from the **Men's Metro 3** North and West competitions will be promoted the following year into the Men's Metro 2 North/West competitions. The Minor Premier only from the Men's Metro 3 South and East competitions will be promoted the following year into the Men's Metro 2 South/East competition.



### Women's Metro Competition

At the end of the season, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> placed teams in the **Women's Metro 1** North/West and South/East competitions will be relegated to the Women's Metro 2 North/West and South/East competitions.

The Minor Premier and winner of the Grand Final (or the second team on the ladder at the end of the 18 round home and away season if the winner of the Grand Final is also the Minor Premier) from the Women's Metro 2 North/West and South/East competitions will be promoted the following year into the Women's Metro 1 North/West and South/East competitions.



## **How many rounds will the 2013 season be?**

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The surveys conducted as part of the Competition Structure Review highlighted a strong preference, for a variety of reasons, **not** to extend the open-age season beyond 18 rounds and the 3-week finals system (total of 21 weeks).

Issues of player management and welfare were discussed in detail by HV's High Performance Committee and the Board.

A decision has been made to retain the 18 round 'Home and Away' season for 2013 and this system will be further reviewed at the end of the 2014 season.

## **What will the Premier League and Vic League I fixture look like?**

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In order to retain the 18 round 'home and away' season for the 12 team Premier League and Vic League I competitions, including the Reserves teams in these two grades, a non-subjective fixture matrix has been developed.

As part of the Competition Structure Review, many types of competition structures were investigated including playing each team once (11 games) and then having a 'floating' fixture where the top 6 teams and the bottom six teams play each other (a further 5 games) with a move then into an expanded finals system, however the negatives of this type of fixture is that HV cannot devise and confirm the fixture for clubs from rounds 12 onwards and we would not be able to provide a equal number of Home and Away games.

For the reasons outlined above, it was not considered favourable to conduct a 22 round competition (in which each team plays each other twice) and then a 3-week finals series which would extend the season to a total of 25 rounds as opposed to the 21 rounds we currently have.

The fixturing system for 12 teams over 18 games has been carefully designed and is believed to be the fairest to all participants.

The fixture matrix for an 18 round 'Home and Away' season with 12 teams participating is as follows:

## **Round 1**

Round 1 is determined on the final rankings from the previous year at the conclusion of the finals series.

For example, in 2013, rankings 1-10 are taken from the final positions on the 2012 State League 1 ladder following the finals series and rankings 11 and 12 are the two teams promoted from the State League 2 competition.

For 2014 onwards, rankings 1-11 are taken from the final positions on the 2013 Premier League ladder following the finals series and ranking 12 will be the Minor Premier promoted from the Vic League 1 competition.

The season will commence with a replay of the previous year's Grand Final.

<b>ROUND 1</b>
<b>1 v 2</b>
<b>3 v 4</b>
<b>5 v 6</b>
<b>7 v 8</b>
<b>9 v 10</b>
<b>11 v 12</b>

## **Rounds 2 to 12**

During Rounds 2 to 12 (inclusive), all teams will play each other **once**.

## **Rounds 13 to 17**

Rounds 13 to 17 (inclusive) are determined on the rankings at the start of the season and the fixture matrix is organised according to 'odds' versus 'odds' and 'evens' versus 'evens'.

## **Round 18**

Round 18 is determined on the rankings from the previous year.

<b>ROUND 18</b>
<b>1 v 6</b>
<b>2 v 7</b>
<b>3 v 8</b>
<b>4 v 9</b>
<b>5 v 10</b>
<b>11 v 12</b>

In 2013, the Premier League season will conclude with a match between the two teams that were promoted from the State League 2 competition in 2012.

## Who will your club play and how many times?

If you are participating in the Premier League, Premier League Reserves, Vic League I and Vic League I Reserves 12 team 18 round competitions, the table below outlines the teams that you will be playing during the season as well as the number of times that you will be playing each team.

The home and away fixturing will be completed by HV and within the scope of the draw, best endeavours will be used to fixture the top four teams from your club (Premier League or Vic League women and their Reserves team & the Premier League or Vic League men and their Reserves team) playing at the same venue on a given day.

TEAM RANKING														
OPPOSITION TEAM RANKING		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	1		2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
	2	2		1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
	3	2	1		2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
	4	1	2	2		1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2
	5	2	1	2	1		2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
	6	2	2	1	2	2		1	2	1	2	1	2	2
	7	2	2	2	1	2	1		2	2	2	1	2	1
	8	1	2	2	2	1	2	2		1	2	1	2	2
	9	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1		2	2	2	1
	10	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1		1	2	2
	11	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1			3
	12	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	3		

With the exception of the teams ranked 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, every other team plays seven (7) opposition teams twice in the season and four (4) opposition teams once.

The teams' ranked 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> coming into the season will play each other three times during the season. This creates a brilliant opportunity for these two teams to demonstrate their ability to remain in the Premier League competition. Remember that in the Premier League competition, only the 12<sup>th</sup> placed team (and their linked Reserves team) at the end of the 18 round 'Home and Away' season will be relegated to the Vic League I competition.

The major benefit of this proposed model is that HV can construct this fixture as soon as the previous year's Finals have been completed and the 1-12 rankings can be confirmed. The draw and associated fixturing can be communicated to all affiliates in advance of previous years and clubs can then effectively plan clubs events and social activities around this stable fixture.

## **Other Grades**

The process for the generation of the fixture for all other 10 team competitions participating in the 18 rounds 'Home and Away' format will remain unchanged.

HV will commence drafting as soon as the season has been completed and all affiliates will be provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback. The consultative process that has operated in the past will continue.

## **How will the finals system work?**

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The 3-week traditional finals system will remain in place for the Open-Age competitions.

<b>SEMI FINALS</b>	1 v 2 & 3 v 4
<b>PRELIMINARY FINAL</b>	Loser of Semi Final 1 v 2 versus Winner of Semi Final 3 v 4
<b>GRAND FINAL</b>	Winner of Semi Final 1 v 2 versus Winner of Preliminary Final

This system may be reviewed in a few years time once the Premier League, Premier League Reserves, Vic League I and Vic League I Reserves competitions have settled as 12 team competitions.

The finals system for the Under-Age (Juniors) and Open-Age (Masters) competitions will remain unchanged.

## **Will there be a 'Licence Fee' to participate in the Premier League and Vic League I competitions?**

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HV is currently reviewing a sliding scale for team entry costs according to the tier of competition. This will be very similar to many clubs which operate a sliding scale for their clubs fees based on the level of competition, access to facilities for training, access to coaching services, etc.

Any changes to the Team Entry costs for the 2013 season will be reviewed and approved by the HV Board as part of their annual budgeting process and any outcomes from this process will be communicated to affiliates in a timely manner. This notification would ordinarily be provided in late November / early December once the following year's budget has been finalised and approved by the Board.

# Masters (Veterans Over-Age) Competition

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## Background Information

The current divisions of the Australian Masters Hockey competitions are as follows:

Men	Women
Over 35's (note 1)	Over 35's
Over 40's	Over 40's
Over 45's	Over 45's
Over 50's	Over 50's
Over 55's	Over 55's
Over 60's	Over 60's
Over 65's	
Over 70's (note 2)	

**Note 1.** Currently there is an Over 35's men's tournament which is conducted separately to the Australian Men's Masters Championship. This has operated for the past two years and a proposal is currently being reviewed to formally include this as an age group at the 2012 Australian Men's Masters Championship.

**Note 2.** The Over 70's men's division is subject to the team entries received.

## Current Entry Age for Women's Veterans

The entry age for HV's Women's Over-Age (Veterans) competitions is currently **35** years of age with the provision in the HV rules for up to two (2) players who turn 34 in the year of the competition to participate.

## Current Entry Age for Men's Veterans

The entry age for HV's Men's Over-Age (Veterans) competitions is currently **40** years of age with the provision in the HV rules for up to two (2) players who turn 39 in the year of the competition to participate.

## Name Change in 2012

From the commencement of the 2012 season, all Veterans (Over-Age) competitions will utilise the national branding of '**Masters**'.

## Men's Masters Competition Structure

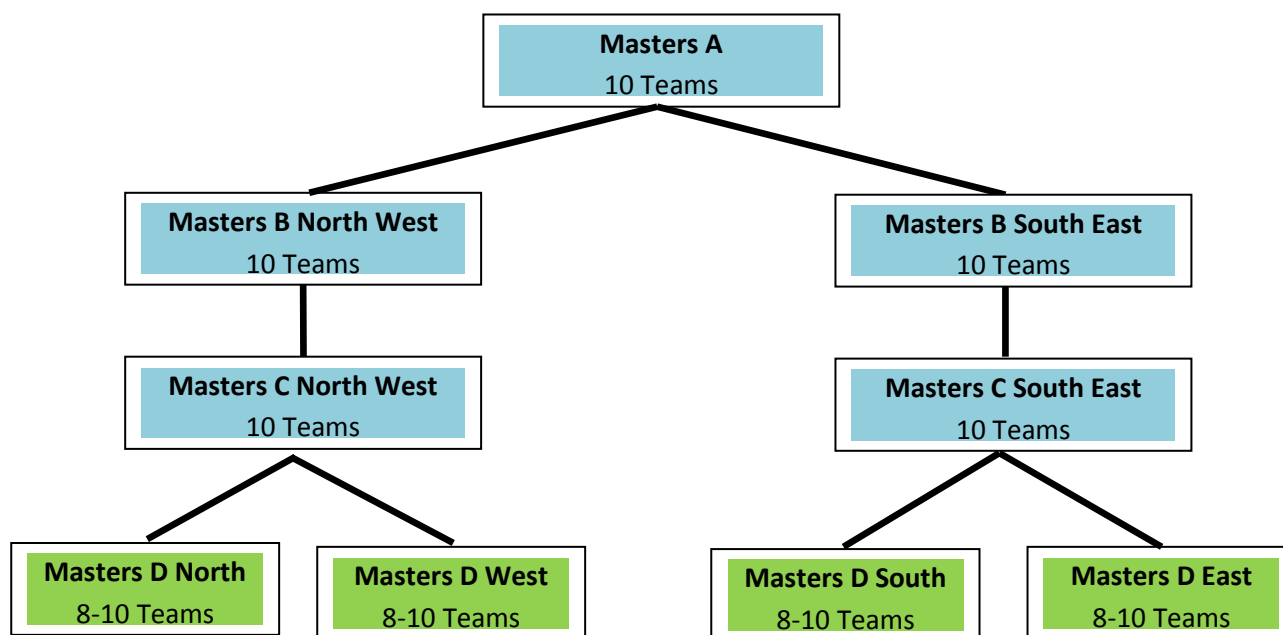
### 2012

The entry age for the Men's Masters competitions will **not** alter in 2012, however a provision in the HV rules will be made to allow for up to four (4) players aged between 35 and 39 in the year of the competition to participate.

### 2013

To bring the Men's Masters competition in line with the age groups for the Australian Masters Hockey competitions and HV's Women's Masters competition, the entry age for HV Men's Masters competition will be reduced from **40** years of age to **35** years of age with provision in the HV rules for up to two (2) players who turn 34 in the year of the competition to participate.

From the commencement of the **2013** season, the revised structure outlined below will create competitions based on regions and will assist in reducing the amount of travel for the lower grades of the Masters competitions.

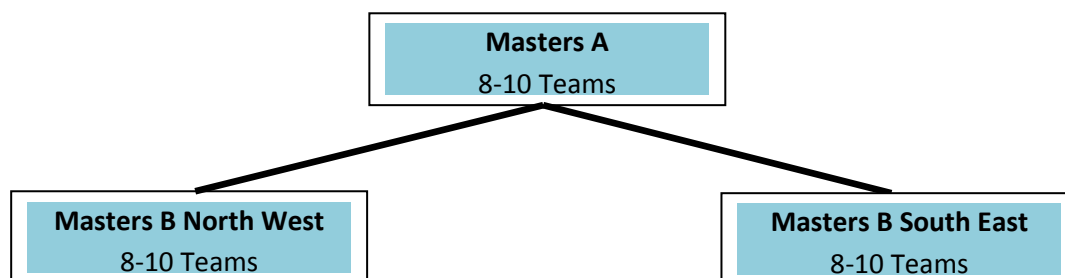


## Women's Masters Competition Structure

2012

From the commencement of the **2012** season, the revised structure will see the existing Women's Veterans B competition split into two divisions.

Further divisions based on regions will occur in the future once team entries are increased.



### **Further Investigation**

Over the next few months, HV will survey all current Masters players and review the ground availability to investigate whether it is more appropriate and attractive to our Masters participants if the Masters competitions is played on a Wednesday night and the Super Masters competitions is played on a Monday night given the large number of players who currently participate in the Pennant and Metro levels of the Open-Age (Senior) competitions on the weekend and then back-up and play in the Masters (Over-Age) competitions on a Monday night.

No changes will be made to the 2012 season in this regard but subject to the results of the survey and consultation, HV will consider options for the 2013 season.

The survey will also investigate how many people who have the skills to play in the Masters competitions currently do not participate because their partner participates and it is not convenient to have both adults playing hockey on the same night. What would be the impact on having the Men's and Women's Veterans competitions on separate days? Would more people participate? These are some of key questions that need to be asked in order for HV to make informed decisions on any potential future changes to the fixturing of the Masters competitions.

In the future, HV would also like to investigate the advantages of organising the Masters competitions according to the following age groups:

#### **MEN**

Over 35

Over 45

Over 55

#### **WOMEN**

Over 35

Over 45

If the above structure was adopted, all age groups would still have a provision to have up to two (2) players 'playing up' in a given age group. For example, two 34 year olds are able to participate in the Over 35 competition, two 35-39 year olds are able to participate in the Over 40 competition and two 45-54 year olds are able to participate in the Over 55 competition.

Obviously this competition structure will only be possible if the Masters competitions continue to expand.

## Junior (Under-Age) Competition

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The Junior (Under-Age) Competition has undergone a few changes over the past three years as we have attempted to address the issues of travel, match times and 'regionalising' the competitions. There is no doubt that more work is required in this critical area of our participation and competition pathway.

As you may be aware, HV is currently reviewing various options for the improvement of the 2012 Junior competition, especially at the Under 9 and Under 11 levels. Concepts for change are being discussed at the Junior Forums that HV's Operations Manager, Andrew Skillern, has been facilitating throughout 2011.

I would strongly encourage all affiliates to ensure that they are represented at these Junior Forums because your voice is important when we are considering the various options for change. The next Junior Forum is scheduled to be held on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011** at the State Netball Hockey Centre from **10.00am – 1.00pm**.

For further details on the Junior Competition structure, please liaise directly with Andrew Skillern via email at [askillern@hockeyvictoria.org.au](mailto:askillern@hockeyvictoria.org.au) or **8379 4286**.

## Indoor Hockey Competitions

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Hockey Victoria's Indoor Advisory Group (IAG) has been working with the HV office to review the current Indoor Hockey competitions. Some changes were made for the 2011 summer indoor hockey competition and further changes are planned for the 2012 summer indoor hockey competition.

The HV office and IAG will communicate these changes in the coming months.

## Summer Hockey Competitions

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The HV office is currently reviewing the Summer Hockey competitions. These competitions were not included in the preliminary scope of the Competitions Structure Review.

The HV office will communicate the results of this review in the coming months.

## Rules and Regulations

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The HV office will commence the drafting of the new Rules & Regulations for the 2013 season and once these documents have been updated and approved by the HV Board then they will be distributed to affiliates prior to start of the 2012 season.

## Summary

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On behalf of the Board and management, I appreciate your patience with this important project and I would like to take this opportunity to once again sincerely thank all of the affiliates who have contributed to this review with detailed submissions and recommendations. Your input and proactive approach has been much appreciated.

We are extremely excited about the positive development outcomes that will flow from a better defined competition structure that provides greater opportunities for growth and development for more affiliates than the current structure.

Yours sincerely,



**Ben Hartung**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hockey Victoria

# APPENDIX I

## Key Opportunities and Solutions

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The **Competitions Structure Review** identified the following opportunities and solutions:

<b>1</b>	<b>Maintain existing strengths of current competition</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each HV Club has a potential place in elite structure</li><li>• Structure allows multiple levels of competitions</li><li>• Could enhance the definition of Elite, Sub-Elite and Social Competitions</li></ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the scope for all clubs to be part of top tier of HV competition</li><li>• Better create and define elite, participation and social tiers of competition</li></ul>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Increase size of elite leagues</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand top tier competition(s) to enhance opportunities for more clubs to become elite clubs (consider for top 2 men's and women's only)</li></ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase elite leagues from 10 to 12 teams</li><li>• Less player turnover for clubs and greater ability to build and market consistent rivalries</li></ul>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Expansion and Development of Elite Product</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a single optimum elite product (e.g. branded 'Premier League' with concentrated playing talent)</li></ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly defined and branded elite league product in line with other Victorian Elite/Premier Sport Leagues</li><li>• Enhanced attractiveness for sponsorship opportunities</li></ul>	

<b>4</b>	<b>Enhanced Club Days and Fixturing</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More club days need to be provided</li> <li>• Accommodate requests to have 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> team play together more consistently and have Men and Women teams player together more consistently</li> </ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have grades play on certain (consistent) days</li> <li>• Proposed structure inclusive of fixed reserves system will allow for structuring top teams playing together.</li> <li>• In turn, clubs days will create greater attendance and revenue opportunities for clubs</li> </ul>	

<b>5</b>	<b>Encourage Clubs to engage in Sport Development outcomes</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to tie in aspects of HV objectives into competition outcomes</li> <li>• Provide incentives for clubs to contribute to development of Hockey</li> <li>• This has been successfully implemented in other sports</li> </ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and apply Sport Development criteria for clubs which must be met to participate in elite leagues (could include umpire development or the facilitation of junior development programs)</li> </ul>	

<b>6</b>	<b>Increase Competitive Equity of Clubs / Reduce impact of player turnover (Strengthen with Reserves)</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hockey is one of the only Victorian Sport League structures without a formalised reserves league</li> </ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock step seniors and reserves for each club (move through promotion and relegation together)</li> <li>• Reserves structure increase playing base for each club</li> <li>• Greater concentration of elite players in more Victorian clubs</li> <li>• Emphasis on 30 'elite' or 'development' hockey players per club</li> <li>• This would increase stability and limit the impact of player transfers on a club</li> </ul>	

<b>7</b>	<b>Test feasibility of Social Competition</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Midweek competition (consider impact on Metro weekend competition) has been proposed</li> <li>• Advent of Weeknight competitions (for elite and Metro)</li> <li>• Mid Week Ladies competition proposed during the day</li> </ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HV to investigate the introduction of social midweek competitions in 2012 or 2013. HV to assess the impact on existing Metro structures.</li> </ul>	

<b>8</b>	<b>Overcoming Travel Issues / Use of Geographic Zones</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce travel for umpires and players at junior and lower senior (Metro and Masters) levels</li> </ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HV to use its best endeavors to 'regionalise' the Junior District, Senior Metro (Participation) and lower grades of the Masters levels of competition so that the amount of travel is reduced.</li> </ul>	

<b>9</b>	<b>Masters (Veterans)</b>
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify and align the age for veterans competitions</li> </ul>	
<b>Competition Design Solution / Outcome</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The qualification age for the Men's Masters (Veterans) competition will be reduced from 40 years of age to 35 years of age for the 2012 season so that the Men's and Women's Masters competitions are aligned and the Men's Masters is aligned with the National Masters age groupings.</li> </ul>	

**10**

**Strategic Leadership for Competition**

**Description**

- Clear vision for the current and future development of competition should be outlined.  
Clear alignment with strategic plan of HV needs to be tied to this

**Competition Design Solution / Outcome**

- Clear communication to stakeholders about key changes to competition structure.
- Construction of a review process and stated areas of future development around league size, structure and youth alignment