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**Chairman**  
Professor Ken McKinnon

**Executive Secretary**  
Jack R. Herman

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Dr Colin McLeod  
AFL House  
GPO Box 1499  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Dr McLeod,

Thank you for your letter of 6 June.

I have now checked the details of the case again with AAP. I enclose a copy of its letter to you. The agency again sought to have its photographers accredited based on the offer implied in your 6 June letter. The AFL has again refused the agency accreditation.

The Council can draw no conclusion other than that the AFL is seeking to limit access of outside photographers to events that are clearly news events. It is seeking bit-by-bit to limit news coverage to those images available through its own affiliated photography outlet.

When the Council queried the discreditation of overseas news agency in 2007, it was assured that AAP would continue to be accredited, enabling the smaller and independent regional press to continue to have access to an independent source of news photographs. In 2008, the AFL apparently changes its mind about access of independent photographers. It seeks to limit those outlets to those images released by its own people, leading to a suspicion that it may censor news images in the interest of its own image or the interests of its sponsors.

The Council finds it ironic that, at a time when the AFL is seeking to break new ground by establishing a team in south-east Queensland, it has discredited the agency that provides images of the AFL games to many of the regional daily and community newspapers publishing in that region, and elsewhere in northern NSW and in regional Queensland. You could not imagine a more counter-productive action for the AFL to take in that vicinity.

The AFL leaves the Council no choice but to take up this issue as a serious threat to press freedom – the freedom of the press to inform the public on matters of interest and to report properly on news events without the intermediation of those seeking to ‘manage’ the news.

Yours sincerely,

*D. Kerina*

*for* Jack R Herman

Cc

Mr Tony Gillies

Mr Andrew Demetriou, CEO, AFL

Sen. Stephen Conroy, Minister for the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy