

TO: Anti-siphoning review Senate Committee
FROM: Ben Buckley - AFL General Manager - Broadcasting, Strategy & Major Projects
RE: AFL SUBMISSION ON ANTI-SIPHONING

The AFL thanks the Senate Committee for the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into the anti-siphoning scheme.

As you know, the AFL is responsible for managing Australia's national elite Australian Rules football competition. In addition it serves to promote and develop the game of football throughout the country investing several millions of dollars every year to ensure the long term health and growth of the game for many generations to come.

The AFL has previously made submissions to the Government and other regulatory bodies in relation to our concerns about the anti-siphoning scheme. Please refer to those submissions as a supporting case to this latest submission.

Essentially we are concerned with the scheme as it is too broad, covering the entire AFL competition, and importantly, it interferes with our ability to sell our broadcast rights in the most effective way for the both the AFL and the public, possibly affecting our ability to remain a strong, sustainable and largely self-sufficient sports organisation into the future.

The AFL would not be supportive of any changes to the scheme which would further restrict our ability to deal with subscription TV or the way in which we would have to negotiate with broadcasters, either through free-to-air TV or subscription TV.

Having said that, we do support any measure which improves the operation and efficiency of the current anti-siphoning scheme. As a result, we believe that the proposed amendments [moving the automatic de-listing period from six weeks to 12 weeks before an event] should be implemented.

All sporting organisations and their broadcasters seek to finalise broadcast plans well in advance in order to make appropriate logistical, operational and marketing plans. A 12-week period is much more appropriate than the current six-week period as it will enable sports bodies to better plan their works and allow broadcast partners greater certainty about broadcast arrangements.

The AFL would be happy to appear before the Committee to further elaborate on these matters if requested.

Kind Regards,

Ben Buckley
General Manager - Broadcasting, Strategy & Major Projects

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