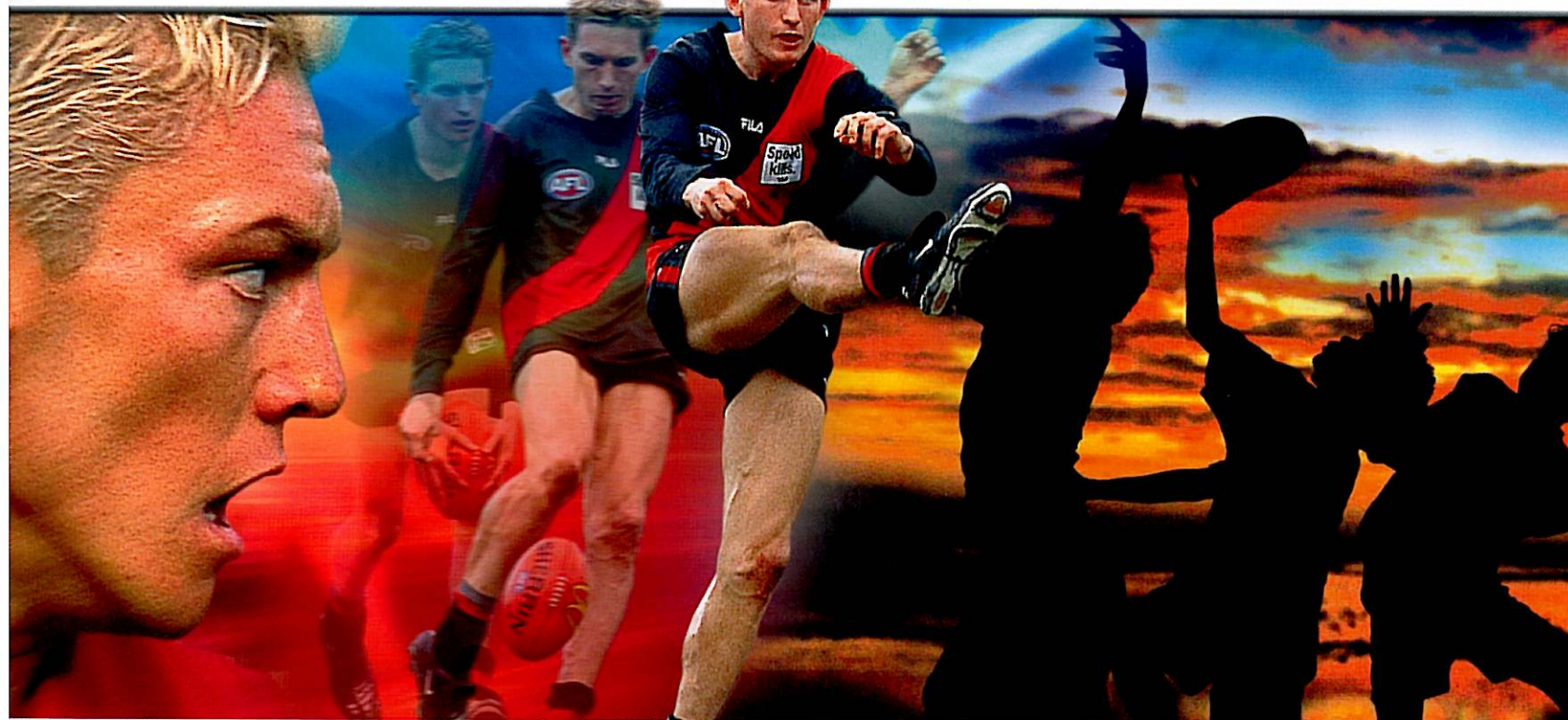


2
DAY
LOAN



104th Annual Report

AFL 2000

NATIONAL SPORT INFORMATION CENTRE
AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION
LEVENIER STREET
BRUCE A.C.T. 2617
AUSTRALIA

26 MAR 2001

A U S T R A L I A N F O O T B A L L L E A G U E



CONTENTS

- 3** Mission Statement
- 15** Executive Report
- 31** Football Operations
- 45** Corporate Affairs & Communications
- 53** Commercial Operations
- 63** Game Development
- 73** Finance and Administration
- 77** Farewells
- 83** 2000 AFL Achievers, Results & Attendances
- 111** Financial Statements
- 126** Index
- 127** AFL People and Structure
- 129** Fixture 2001

ON THE WAY: Carlton's Scott Camporeale will mark 2000 down as the year he proved how good a player he could be.

COVER: Winners of Season 2000 (clockwise from top left) Kevin Bartlett (Australian Football Legend), Paul Hasleby (Norwich Union AFL Rising Star), Essendon (Premiers 2000), Matthew Lloyd (Coleman Medallist), Australians in Ireland (Won Test series 2-0), James Hird (Norm Smith Medallist, Premiership captain), Shane Woewodin (Brownlow Medallist).

During 2000, the AFL went through a period of unprecedented change: new infrastructure, new key personnel, a new stadium and a new office environment. What didn't change was the AFL's role as trustee of the game at all levels. The AFL is not just the manager of the national AFL competition, but is also responsible for Game Development at all levels.

This is entirely consistent with the AFL's **Mission Statement**, and guiding principles.

- ①..... **To manage the national competition to ensure it is the most successful national elite sports competition for the benefit of our key stakeholders — our AFL clubs, players and public.**
- ②..... **To promote high levels of player participation, in well-managed programs, down to the grassroots level.**
- ③..... **To promote public interest in the game by building the strongest consumer brand position in Australian sport.**
- ④..... **To attract and develop the most talented athletes and sports administrators.**
- ⑤..... **To foster good citizenship, both on and off the playing field.**

These have always been the driving influences behind decisions made by the AFL Commission.

In 2000, a great amount of time and financial resources were spent by the AFL on all these areas, with the year concluding with a successful negotiation of broadcast rights, an arrangement which will underpin the finances of the AFL game and its clubs for the duration of the agreement and beyond. In the next 10 pages, this report will show, in summary, how, where and why the AFL's resources were invested – with due regard to its Mission Statement – and the achievements the AFL made in season 2000. The full detail follows, department by department.

Ron Evans

CHAIRMAN, AFL COMMISSION

ATTENDANCES UP

Most successful sports competition

2000 was an unusual year, with the Sydney Olympics imposing their presence on all Australians. The AFL was forced to bring forward its season by almost a month, and the Grand Final was played in the first week of September. This caused fixturing problems at the start of the season, some of which were caused by the AFL agreeing to requests from state governments to schedule matches around the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne and Adelaide's Clipsal 500. Our fixturing was clearly not accepted by the football public for which the AFL expressed its regret. These events galvanised the AFL into action, and the fixture presented for season 2001 has been roundly praised by all. Despite the early problems, which included difficulties with the surface and management of the AFL's newest Melbourne stadium, Colonial Stadium, overall attendances finished ahead of season 1999, and the strength of the game was greater than it had been before. Great players in James Hird and Paul Kelly returned to the game and the Essendon club produced one of the greatest seasons in the history of the game, losing just one of its 22 premiership season matches, and barnstorming through the finals. The club performed superbly against a valid and vibrant opponent in Melbourne in the Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final, winning brilliantly. The Grand Final was again the most watched annual sporting event in Australia. No other sport in Australia — save the Olympics for its two weeks of wonderful sport — was able to engender the passion and great following that AFL football did in 2000.

AGONY AND THE ECSTASY: The workload was huge, the expectations were huge and after the final siren on Grand Final day, the relief was enormous as Essendon captain James Hird shares the moment with wife Tanya and daughter Stephanie.



MARK DADSWELL - ALLSPORT

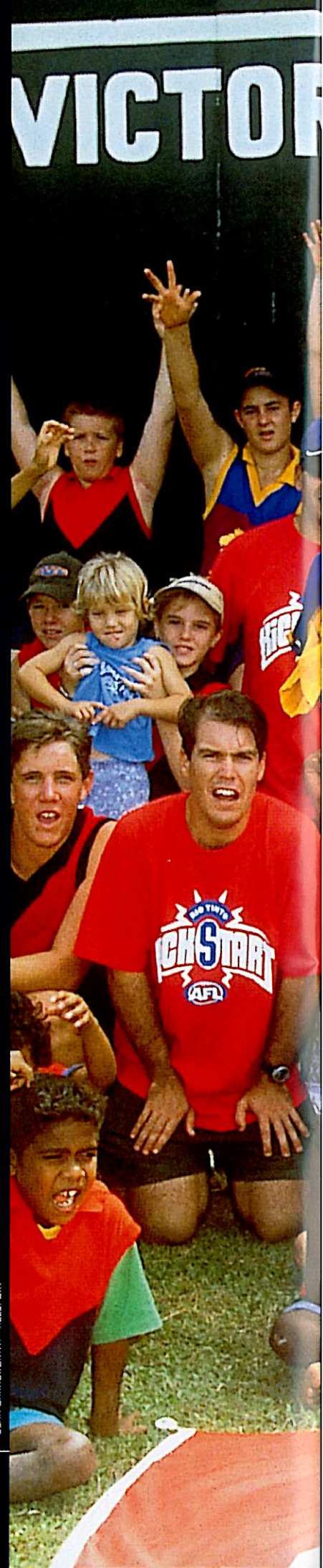


PARTICIPATION LEVELS GROW

Player Participation

The game belongs not to administrators, but to the players, supporters and volunteers at all levels. From the very young, learning the game in AFL Auskick, through junior competitions and the AFL, to those veterans who play for laughs, companionship and — memories. From the west coast through the outback and its southern Australian heartland, the game is stronger than ever. And now, through New South Wales, the ACT and Queensland, the AFL game is spreading into all parts of the Australian culture. The AFL spent more than \$15 million on game development in 2000, and has committed similar amounts in 2001 to drive the future of the game. Some 45,000 volunteers throughout Australia continue to give their time and energy to drive the next generation. AFL Auskick, while managed centrally through the AFL's Game Development Department, is 'owned and operated' by parents and friends of football. In 2000, AFL Auskick registrations were up from 76,000 to more than 80,000 nationally, with huge growth recorded in NSW. While still facing challenges, the health of the game at all levels has never been better.

ALL SYSTEMS GO: At AFL Auskick sessions throughout Australia, the enthusiasm of the youngsters is never less than red-hot — and the legions of volunteers who help drive the program are just as energetic. AFL Auskick is used as a vehicle for promoting positive health messages to some of the most remote regions of Australia. The photo on the right was taken at Weipa in the Cape York Peninsula region of northern Australia.



SEAN GARNSWORTHY - ALLSPORT



THE GAME IS SECURE

Strong positioning of the AFL Brand

Branding is the buzz word for the goodwill that belongs to a company, corporation, personality, family. The AFL's brand is the strongest sports brand in Australia, because the AFL works assiduously to maintain the strength and character that is the AFL game. At all levels of administration, this is held dearly, and extends not just to the AFL's commercial imperatives, but to the Laws of The Game, the Code of Conduct recommended for all levels of the game, and including players, supporters and parents, and the way the AFL conducts itself in the community. The AFL's Commercial Operations division has been restructured in 2000 to provide new revenue streams for the AFL, reducing the impact of rising costs on the supporters of the AFL game. The AFL Commission is committed, absolutely, to providing maximum access to the maximum number of fans, at the minimum price. The high status of the AFL brand was a significant component in negotiations for the continuation of broadcasting rights following the end of season 2001, and the AFL believes it has constructed an outstanding arrangement for football in general with its media rights deal from 2002 to 2006, a deal which will underpin the finances of the AFL game and the AFL clubs.

FACE OF FOOTY: For most fans, there is only one team — their team — and for the AFL, there is only one brand — the AFL brand.

MARK DADSWELL - ALLSPORT



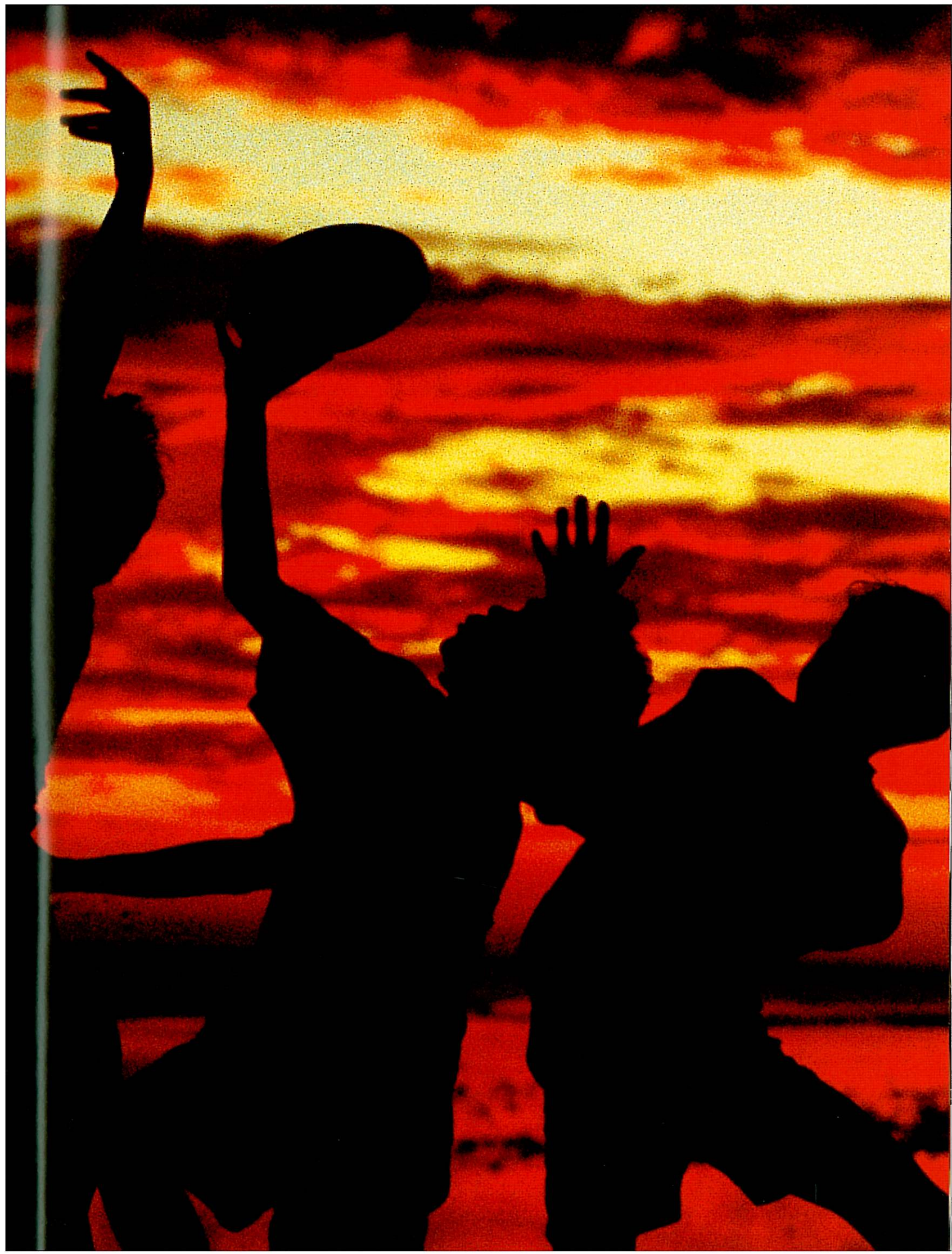
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Talent Identification

The AFL's pre-eminent position in Australian sport is under constant challenge because the game remains indigenous to this country. The AFL is acutely aware of this issue and has created a highly tuned Talent Identification Program aimed at finding and nurturing talent and giving that talent the opportunity to play the game at the highest level. Talent is not just sought at the athlete's level, but in coaching and administration. The link between the organisational structure and the coaching and playing staff is inextricable. Only with all parts working together can a successful conclusion be reached. The AFL continues to invest resources in not just identification, but training and education in coaching, umpiring and playing areas of the game. The ongoing relationship with the Gaelic Athletic Association gives young players opportunities to test their skills and culture at home and in Ireland, providing national representative opportunities for players at under-17 and AFL levels. The AFL has established close links with the Australian Institute of Sport and 30 players under 17 are trained annually through the AIS/AFL Academy.

SKY'S THE LIMIT: The AFL's Talent Identification Program stretches across many sections of the community and through all parts of Australia to make sure the opportunities are plentiful.

SEAN BARNWORTH - ALLSPORT



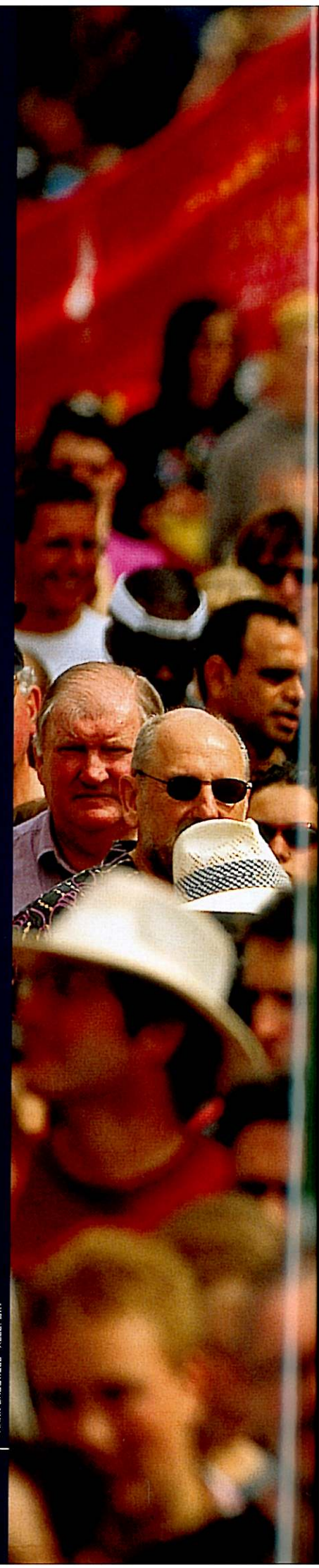
MORE THAN A GAME

Good Citizen

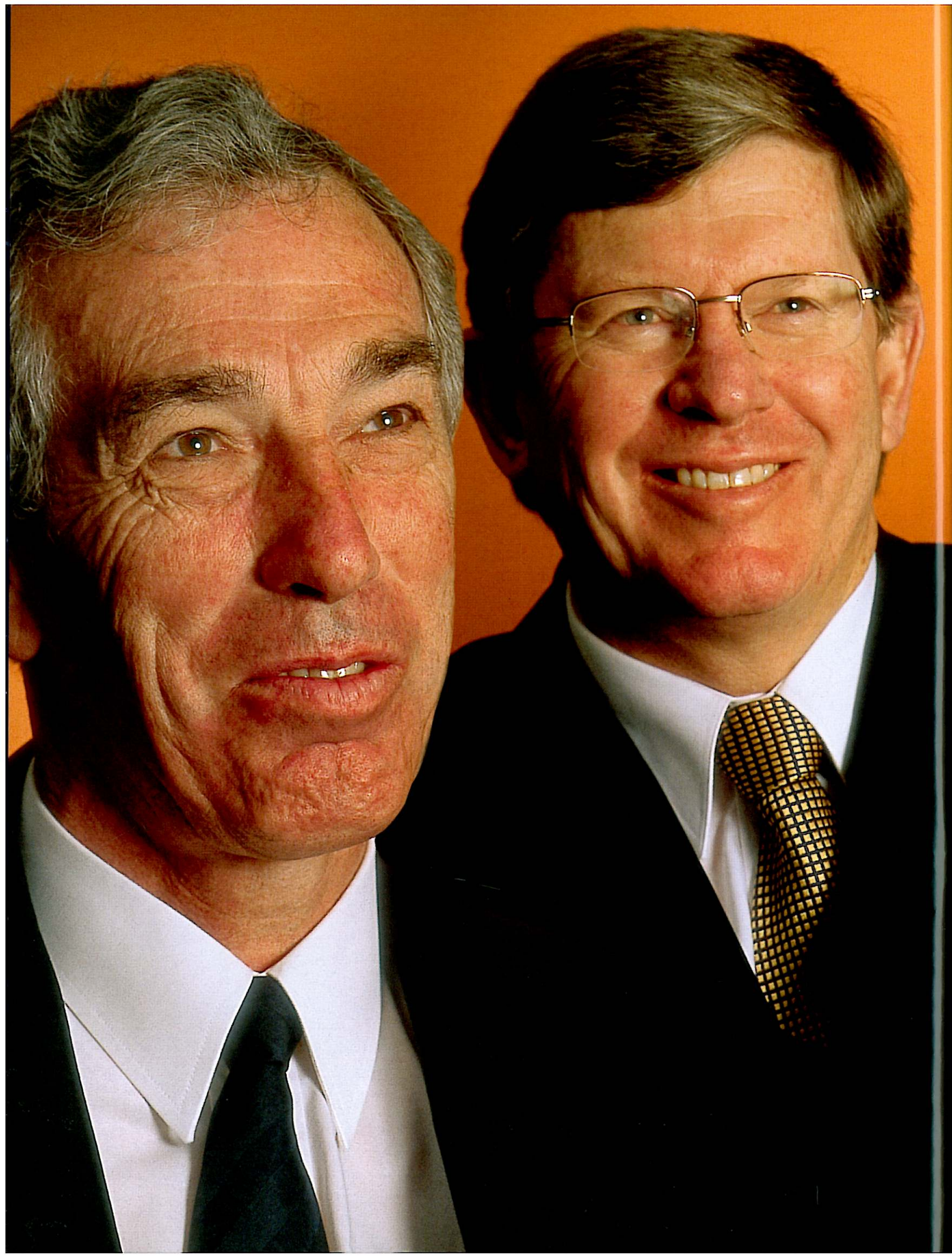
The AFL remains a community leader in the process towards national reconciliation, in squashing racial and religious vilification, in eliminating gratuitous violence, in drug testing its players. It provides equal opportunities in employment and has created strong links with the Aboriginal community, providing natural pathways for gifted young Aborigines to play AFL football. The AFL has a keen recognition of its importance as a role model in these issues and works closely with all levels of the game to ensure that fairness, goodwill, compassion and care extends to all players and supporters of the game. The AFL has also been a significant assistant and supporter of many major charitable organisations and community initiatives, and will continue to expand that role in 2001, with dedicated staff allocated to link the AFL's strength with such organisations.

TOWARDS RECONCILIATION: Several hundred thousand people turned out in Melbourne last December for the Reconciliation Walk, including a number of AFL staff and their families.

MARK DADSWELL - ALLSPORT







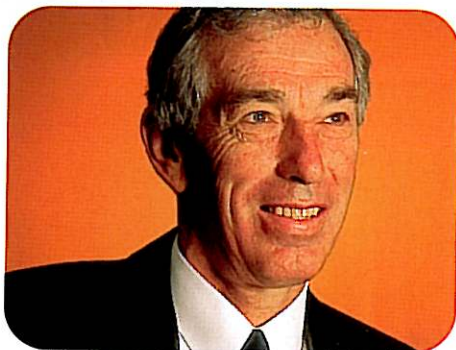


EXECUTIVE REPORT

MAKING DECISIONS: Commission Chairman Ron Evans and Chief Executive Officer Wayne Jackson (left) are the public faces of the AFL Commission. The AFL Commission (above) from left to right comprises Graeme Samuel, Bill Kelty, Colin Carter, Graeme John, Ron Evans, Wayne Jackson, Chris Langford and Terry O'Connor.

A U S T R A L I A N F O O T B A L L L E A G U E





CHAIRMAN - AFL COMMISSION: Ron Evans

AFL Commission's role as Trustee of the game requires firm decisions to be made for the greater good

While this report outlines a number of major issues which were subject to a great deal of public debate and comment during the 2000 season, the AFL Commission's focus remained on key strategies which are designed to enhance the long-term future of our game.

The AFL Commission's agenda for 2000 included:

- Development of a broadcasting strategy for 2002 and beyond.
- Continued substantial investment in national grassroots football development programs. New initiatives included the implementation of a new structure for football in Victoria including the Victorian Football League as the major senior competition in the state; continued progress in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory; implementing the first stage of increased development throughout Queensland, special assistance for the Northern Territory Football League and increased financial support for the talented player pathway in Western Australia. In 2000, the AFL directly invested \$15.2 million in game development programs.
- Identifying a strategy for further AFL growth in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory including the playing of AFL matches in the region.
- The first season of AFL matches at Colonial Stadium.

We take very seriously our broad responsibility to manage what we unashamedly believe is the most exciting game in the world.

The make-up of the AFL Commission has changed from time to time since the formation of an independent Commission in 1985, but its fundamental task has not changed: to act as the trustee of Australian Football. In that

role, we do all we can to ensure that the AFL competition and the game itself are enhanced for future generations.

Sometimes, our role means we preside over major changes to the game. We also accept the fact that change is not always embraced by the football public throughout Australia but if we are to fulfil effectively that role as trustees, we will inevitably have to consider ways of doing things differently and better to ensure the game's long-term future.

A National Game

As we have indicated in recent years, the establishment of Australian Football as a truly national code played at all levels in communities throughout Australia is one of our key strategic objectives.

Success in some states of Australia and not others will not satisfy our national aspirations. That is why we have increased significantly our investment in game development in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory during the past two years.

We also accepted recommendations last year from an AFL-appointed review group to boost development of our game throughout Queensland. Our vision for the northern states requires long-term investment if we are to bring about generational change in the way the broad community accepts and supports Australian Football.

At the same time, we are not overlooking the traditional football states of South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania, which are the foundation upon which the game is built.

This emphasis on national grassroots development should not be confused with our national AFL competition consisting of 16 clubs in five mainland capital cities.

'AS WE HAVE INDICATED IN RECENT YEARS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL AS A TRULY NATIONAL CODE PLAYED AT ALL LEVELS IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF OUR KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES'

Our priority, therefore, is to optimise the financial support for our 16 AFL clubs while investing in national grassroots football development.

Distributions

In line with this agenda, we distributed \$50.2 million to our clubs in 2000 compared to \$42.1 million in 1999. This included an extra \$300,000 per club to fund the increase in Total Player Payments under the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the AFL Players' Association. We will also be providing an additional \$437,000 per club in 2001 to fund the increase in Total Player Payments.

In 2000, we also provided financial assistance to the Hawthorn and St Kilda Football Clubs for their re-location from Waverley Park to the MCG and Colonial Stadium respectively and maintained grants for national grassroots development programs (\$15.2 million).

This support for our clubs and game development contributed to a deficit for the year of \$7.2 million.

Broadcasting

Our new broadcasting arrangements, which will apply from the 2002 season, were a major achievement. Our key objective was to reach an agreement which delivered the best outcome in all markets, for our supporters, our clubs, and the long-term future of the game.

Waverley Park

There is, however, one major obstacle standing in the way of our long-term objectives for the game and that is the delay in the process for the sale and re-development of the AFL's major asset, Waverley Park.

The heritage listing of Waverley Park has seriously disrupted this process and poses a significant financial burden to our AFL clubs and the AFL game.

The sale of Waverley Park remains an issue fundamental to the long-term future of our game. This was clearly a change

which sections of the football community – particularly in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs – did not support, but with the MCG, Colonial Stadium, Shell Stadium and Optus Oval, our competition could not sustain Waverley Park.

We are confident of working through the appropriate processes with all the relevant authorities to develop Waverley Park. Assuming we are able to realise its full value of some \$80 million during the next few years, it will represent an opportunity to further invest in the long-term future of our AFL clubs and in the development of the AFL game.

It may take several years for those who oppose the sale of Waverley Park to appreciate broader benefits. We are confident this appreciation will occur in the longer term just as other changes in our game have ultimately been embraced by the vast majority of people since the AFL competition developed nationally in 1987.

The AFL Commission recognises its enormous responsibility to ensure that the increased financial support from our new broadcasting arrangements and the eventual proceeds from the sale of Waverley Park are invested wisely to underpin our clubs and grassroots football.



FRONT MEN: Readily available to promote the game for an ever-hungry football media, Geelong captain Ben Graham and the Western Bulldogs' Luke Darcy front for duty.

Melbourne Cricket Ground

During the past year, the AFL Commission established a sub-committee consisting of our Chief Executive Officer Wayne Jackson and Commissioners Colin Carter, Graeme John, Chris Langford and Graeme Samuel to negotiate with the Melbourne Cricket Club and Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust as to how the AFL might assist the continued re-development of the MCG.

While this subject is dealt with in greater detail in our Chief Executive Officer's report, the AFL Commission has indicated it is prepared to increase its financial support to assist with any re-building of the ground.

That position, however, must be considered in the context of our previously stated operational priority – to optimise financial support for our 16 AFL clubs and to invest in the development of grassroots football throughout Australia.

We are not prepared, therefore, to put at risk the future of any AFL club or our support for game development by the level of investment expected by any stadium.

Colonial Stadium

The first season of AFL matches at Colonial Stadium is also covered in some detail in our Chief Executive Officer's report. From an AFL Commission point of view, the operational difficulties which impacted on our AFL clubs and their supporters during the early part of the 2000 season were not acceptable. However, considerable progress was made during the second half of the year.

During 2000, Graeme John joined the AFL Commission, replacing Craig Kimberley who retired at the end of 1999. John, the Managing Director of Australia Post, played for South Melbourne from 1964 to 1969 after joining the club from East Perth. He later coached and was president of South Melbourne.

The AFL is fortunate to have a Commission consisting of capable members with varying and complementary skills. The dedication of our Commission to its various tasks is acknowledged with appreciation.

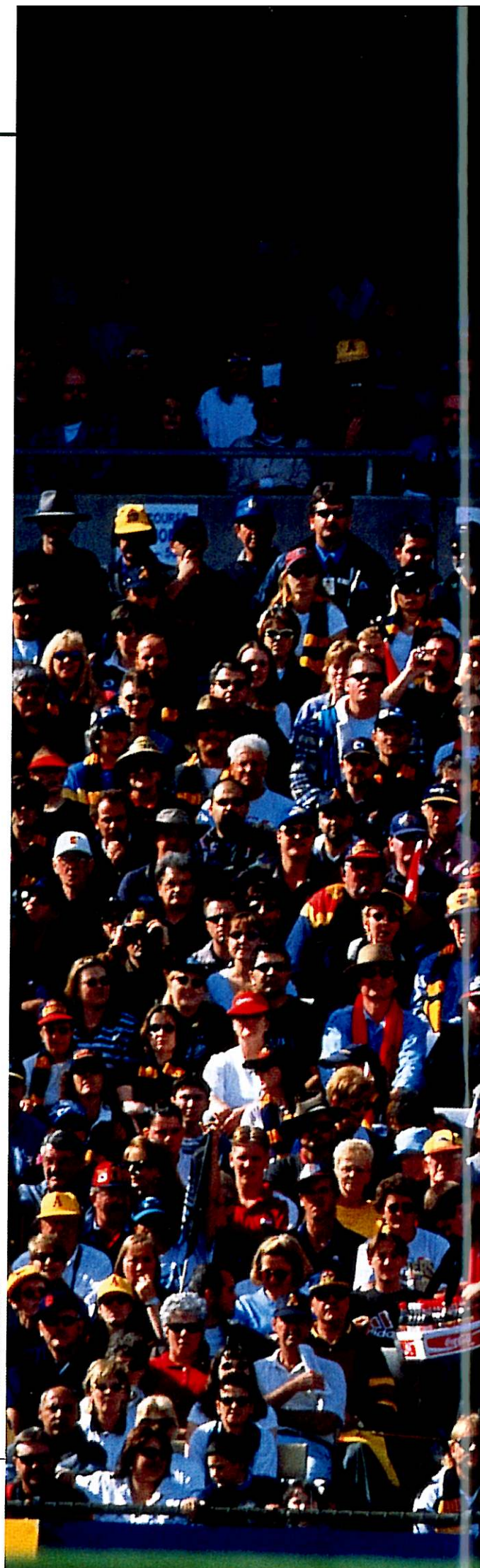
During the year, several new members of the senior executive team were appointed. I believe football will be well served by Ian Anderson, Ben Buckley, Andrew Demetriou and Ross Smith. I welcome them and look forward to their continued contribution.

I thank Wayne Jackson and express appreciation to him and his executive team for their leadership and outstanding example. Thanks to the hard-working administrative staff of the AFL who do so much for the game.

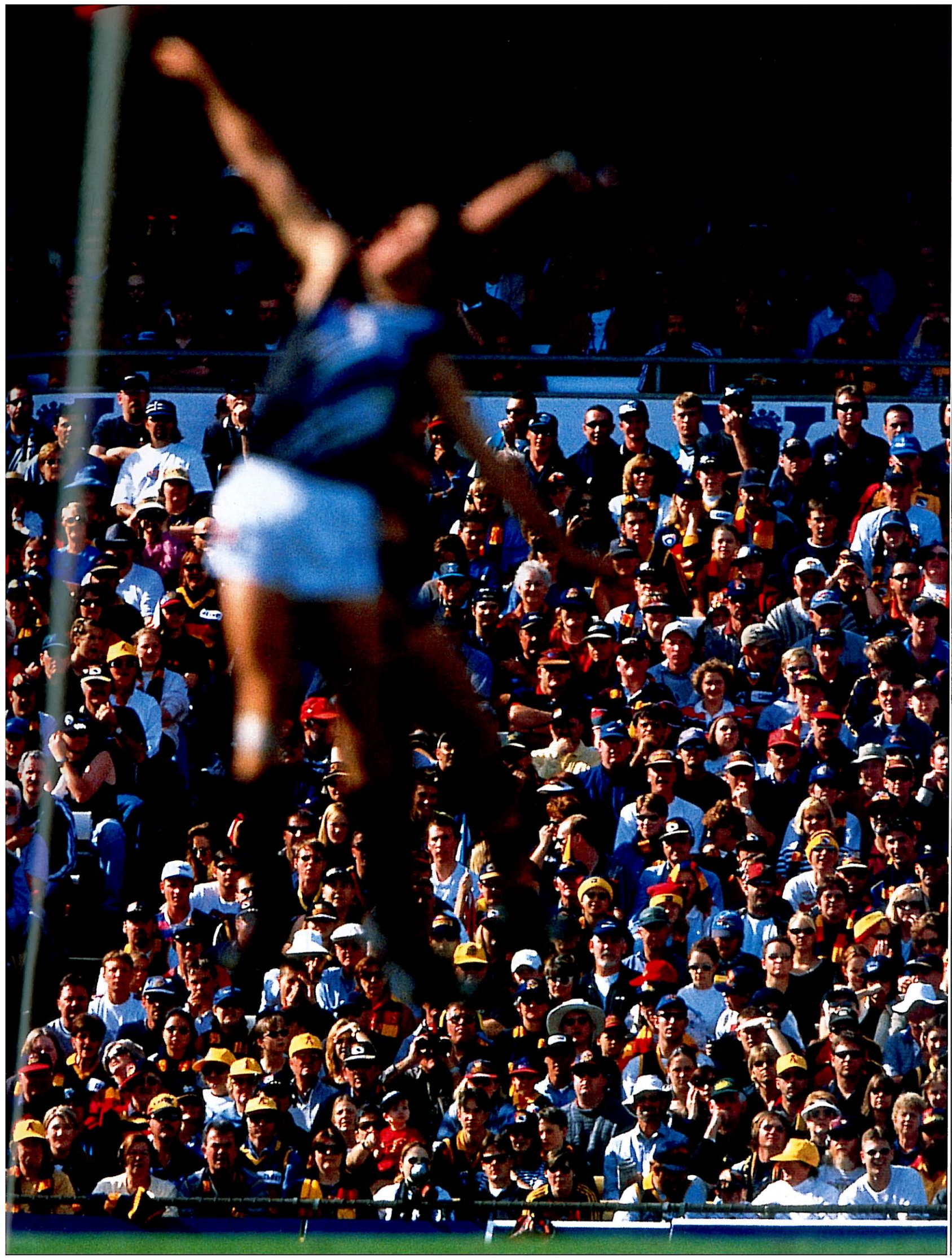


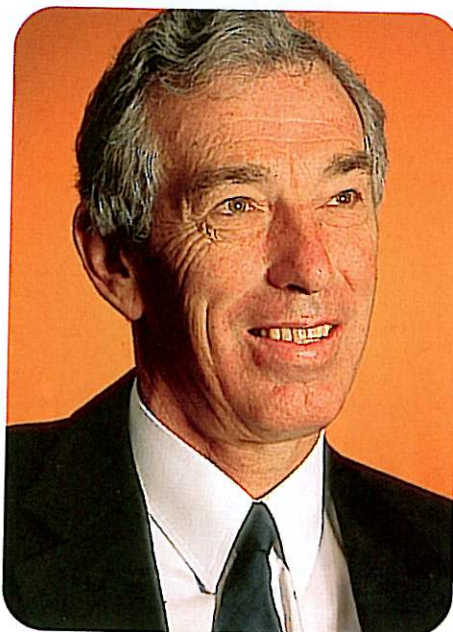
Ron Evans,
Chairman, AFL Commission.

SUSPENDED: Hanging on every movement, football fans are transfixed as the ruckmen hang in mid-air.



NICK WILSON - ALLSPORT





Ron EVANS **Chairman**

President of Essendon Football Club 1988–1992.

Played 61 games and kicked 209 goals as a full-forward for Essendon from 1958–1962.

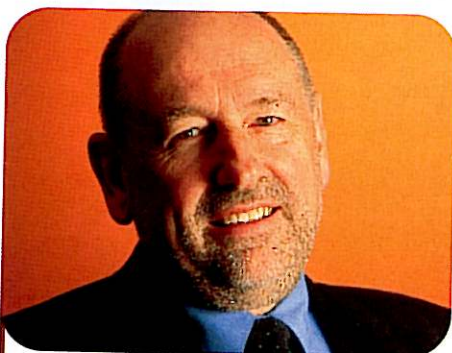
Leading VFL goalkicker in 1959 and 1960.

Managing Director of Spotless Services Limited.

Bachelor of Science (Melbourne University).

Master of Business Administration (Monash University).

Appointed to AFL Commission 1993.



Colin CARTER

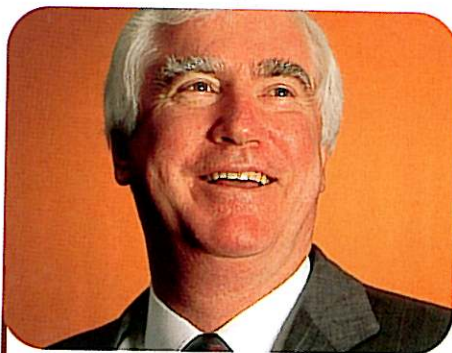
Director of the Boston Consulting Group and played a key role in the development of the report, *Establishing the Basis of Future Success*, adopted by the original VFL Commission in 1985.

Director of Geelong Football Club 1987–1993.

Bachelor of Commerce (Melbourne University).

Master of Business Administration (Harvard University).

Appointed to AFL Commission 1993.



Graeme JOHN

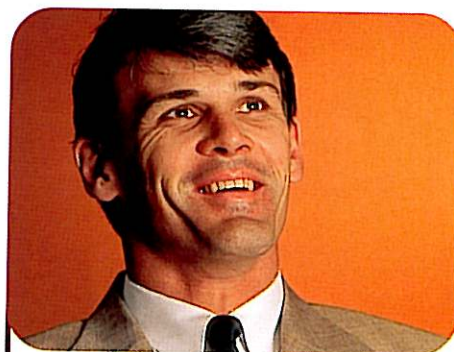
Played 77 games and kicked 97 goals for South Melbourne from 1964 to 1969 and was South Melbourne president from 1978 to 1980.

Appointed Australia Post Managing Director in August 1993, having been the corporation's Chief Manager (National Operations) since 1990.

Previously, was Deputy General Manager for TNT Australia Ltd.

Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Transport, member of the Committee for Melbourne, the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a director of the Road Transport Forum, Consolidated Paper Industries, director and alternate chairman of Australian Air Express and serves on the Australian Coalition of Service Industries.

Became a member of AFL Commission in February 2000.



Chris LANGFORD

Bachelor of Architecture, University of Melbourne, 1987

Architectural consultant, Insulboard Ltd, 1987–88.

Lend Lease Corporation, since 1988, working in a variety of group companies including Lend Lease Retail and Civil & Civic.

Development Manager on such projects as the Greensborough Plaza in Victoria and Darling Park in Sydney and Senior Development Manager for Fox Studios in Sydney.

Development Director, Mirvac Group, from July 2000.

Played 303 senior games — including 25 finals — and 32 pre-season/night series matches with Hawthorn Football Club.

Captain in 1994, vice-captain in 1993.

Member of the 1986, '88, '89 and '91 premierships teams and the 1986, '88, '91 and '92 pre-season/night premiership teams.

Represented Victoria in State of Origin matches 14 times and won the E.J. Whitten Medal as Victoria's best in 1987 and 1997.

All-Australian player in 1987 and 1997.

Director of the AFL (NSW-ACT) Commission since 1998.

Appointed to AFL Commission 1999.

Wayne JACKSON **Chief Executive Officer**

Former member of the South Australian National Football League Commission, 1990–1995.

Life member of Woodville West Torrens F.C. Played 160 games (seniors and seconds) with West Torrens. Also coached the club at senior and reserves level and was chairman of West Torrens, 1975–1979.

Managing Director of The South Australian Brewing Company, 1993–1996.

General Manager, Thomas Hardy & Sons 1977–1981, Managing Director Thomas Hardy & Sons 1981–1992. At that time, Thomas Hardy & Sons merged with Berri Renmano Ltd to become BRL Hardy Limited and the company was publicly floated. Appointed Business Development Director of BRL Hardy and to the main board in 1992.

Bachelor of Economics (Adelaide University). Fellow of Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants.

Appointed to AFL Commission 1995. Appointed Chief Executive Officer, October 1996.



Bill KELTY

Graduated as a Bachelor of Economics from La Trobe University, 1969.

Appointed as an industrial officer, Federated Storemen and Packers Union, 1970.

Appointed research officer for Workers' Education Association, Adelaide, 1974.

Requested by ACTU to prepare and present minimum wage case on behalf of the Port Moresby Council of Trade Unions 1974.

Appointed research officer/advocate for ACTU, 1974.

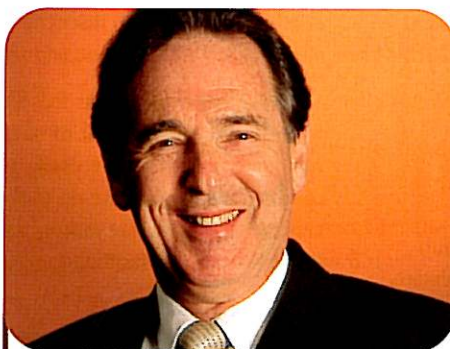
Elected assistant secretary of the ACTU, 1983.

Appointed to the Reserve Bank Board, 1987.

Appointed Chairman of the Commonwealth Government Regional Development Taskforce, 1993.

Other appointments — member of National Labour Consultative Council since 1977; Committee for Melbourne since 1980 and member of Netforce since 1994.

Appointed to AFL Commission 1998.



Graeme SAMUEL

Left a career in law to become executive director of Macquarie Bank and subsequently became a corporate adviser.

Trustee, MCG Trust (1992–1998).

Chairman, Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust.

Chairman, Opera Australia (1995–2000).

President, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1995–1997).

Chairman, Inner and Eastern Health Care Network (1995–2000).

President, National Competition Council.

Member, Docklands Authority.

Bachelor of Laws (Melbourne University).

Master of Laws (Monash University).

Appointed to original VFL Commission in 1984.



Terry O'CONNOR

Chairman of the West Coast Eagles 1990–1993.

Played 300 games of amateur football in Western Australia.

Bachelor of Laws (University of Western Australia).

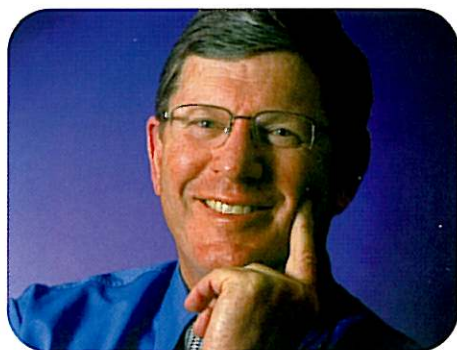
Appointed Queen's Counsel 1987.

Chairman, Ausdrill Limited and Environmental Solutions Limited.

Chancellor, University of Notre Dame, Australia.

Chairman, Interim West Australian Football Commission.

Appointed to AFL Commission 1993.


CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Wayne Jackson

A challenging year in which significant decisions will secure long-term growth in the AFL game

A number of major challenges and issues made 2000 one of the more difficult years in recent times for the AFL administration. These issues included the opening of Colonial Stadium, the heritage listing of Waverley Park, attempts by the Melbourne Cricket Club and Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust to claim a share of the AFL's broadcasting rights, the reconfiguration of Stadium Australia and sightline negotiations, legal action by the Carlton Football Club against the AFL and the scheduling of games, particularly early in the season.

The public debate surrounding some of these issues meant the focus – for both supporters of the game and the AFL administration – at times shifted from the game itself to off-field matters.

Much of the debate created a negative environment and our biggest concern about this negativity was the impact on the people who make our game what it is today, the members and supporters of our AFL clubs and AFL members.

This apparent willingness in some quarters to deal with matters via the media instead of within the football family has some unfortunate consequences. It devalues what those before us have built, it undermines the standing of the game and competition as a whole, but more important than

anything else, it can lead to the supporters of the AFL game, at all levels, becoming disenchanted or skeptical about the management of the game and therefore its future.

Our fundamental role as trustees of Australian Football is to act in the best interest of our AFL clubs, the supporters of the game, and the game itself. It really is time for us all to consider the damage we do to the game and its supporters and take a much more mature approach rather than debate issues outside the football family.

Attendances

Total attendances for the Coca-Cola AFL premiership season and Coca-Cola AFL finals series increased to 6.30 million – from 6.24 million in 1999. This spectator total is more than double the AFL's nearest competitor, rugby league.

Since the competition expanded nationally in 1987, the AFL has set all-time attendance records in 10 of the past 14 seasons.

Attendances at the pre-season Ansett Cup were up more than 51,000 to 325,736, a ringing endorsement to the round-robin concept introduced in season 2000.

After 13 successive seasons of record AFL club membership levels, the total for 2000 reached 438,504 – just short of the 1999 all-time record of 441,711.

Total 2000 AFL Attendances

	2000	1999	Variance	%
Home & Away	5,740,811	5,771,579	-30,768	-0.53
Finals	566,562	472,007	94,555	20.03
Ansett Cup	325,736	273,960	51,776	18.90
State of Origin	0	26,063	-26,063	-100.00
TOTALS	6,633,109	6,543,609	89,500	1.37

Round Records in 2000

	2000	Previous
Round 7	315,636	305,573 (1996)
Round 9	283,846	259,941 (1999)
Round 13	263,274	261,336 (1997)
Round 20	294,455	264,703 (1999)

'OUR FUNDAMENTAL ROLE AS TRUSTEES OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL IS TO ACT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF OUR AFL CLUBS, THE SUPPORTERS OF THE GAME, AND THE GAME ITSELF'

Financial Result

Our key financial outcomes in the period 1995-2000 as detailed in the chart below show:

- An increase of 63% in competition revenue.
- An increase of 71% in the AFL's operating surplus.
- An increase of 84% in payments to AFL Clubs.
- An increase of 212% in grants for national grass roots development programs.
- An increase of 55% in operating expenses.

The AFL's total income for the year 2000 was \$110.7 million which resulted in an operating surplus of \$58.2 million.

A total of \$50.2 million was distributed by the AFL to the 16 AFL clubs in 2000 compared to \$42.1 million in 1999. This includes a special allocation of an extra \$300,000 per club to fund the increase in Total Player Payments under the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the AFL Players' Association.

In addition, the AFL provided financial support for the Hawthorn and St Kilda Football Clubs to assist their relocation from Waverley Park to the MCG and Colonial Stadium respectively.

This extra support for clubs was therefore the key to our financial result for 2000 – a deficit of \$7.2 million.

The key financial policies enacted in season 2000 focused on the following:

- Increased financial security for AFL clubs.
- Rewarding players appropriately.
- Maintaining grants for grassroots development programs through AFL Game Development.
- No increase in prices for the 2000 Coca-Cola AFL finals series, other than GST.
- Minimum admission price increase for the 2001 season.

Actuals - Six-Year Summary

	1995 Actuals \$M	1996 Actuals \$M	1997 Actuals \$M	1998 Actuals \$M	1999 Actuals \$M	2000 Actuals \$M
Revenue	68.058	74.246	82.941	92.420	108.447	110.736
Operating Expenses	33.998	35.970	41.693	45.662	52.795	52.578
Operating Surplus	34.060	38.276	41.248	46.758	55.652	58.158
Payments to Clubs	27.345	29.227	32.815	36.019	42.153	50.230
Development Grants	4.860	5.566	6.534	8.617	12.124	15.156
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	1.855	3.483	1.899	2.122	1.375	(7.228)

Executive Team

The AFL administration underwent further significant change during 2000 when the General Manager - Football Operations, Ian Collins, and the General Manager - Finance and Administration, Kevin Lehmann, resigned to take up senior positions in private enterprise.

Ian Collins was elected a life member of the AFL last year for his service to our game as a player, director and chief executive of the Carlton Football Club and captain-coach of Port Melbourne. He joined the AFL in November 1993 and resigned in March 2000 to take up the position as Chief Executive Officer of Stadium Operations Limited, the owner and operator of Colonial Stadium.

Kevin Lehmann was appointed Finance Director of the Melbourne Aquarium and resigned from the AFL in March 2000. He had joined the AFL in January 1992.

Those resignations meant that of the five general managers who head the AFL's various departments and report to me, four joined the AFL in the 12-month period being reported upon - General Manager - Commercial Operations Ben Buckley, who joined us in November, 1999, General Manager - AFL Game Development Ross Smith, (February, 2000), General Manager - Finance & Administration Ian Anderson, (May 2000), and General Manager - Football Operations Andrew Demetriou, (June 2000).

In making these appointments during the past 15 months, the AFL recognised the need to diversify and bring new strength to the administration so that we can build on our reputation as Australia's most successful national sporting organisation and place greater emphasis on game development and the marketing and promotion of Australian Football.

Colonial Stadium

A protracted industrial dispute caused the completion of Colonial Stadium to be delayed by some months until a few days before the first premiership season game at the venue on Thursday, March 9, between Essendon and Port Adelaide.

The delay led to Ansett Cup games being transferred from Colonial Stadium and there was no opportunity to test the operation of the venue before the premiership season started. Tenant clubs were also anxious to play early premiership season games at Colonial Stadium.

As a result, there were a number of major operational problems at Colonial Stadium in the early weeks of the season which, unfortunately, impacted on our clubs and their supporters. These problems included access to the stadium, an insufficient number of ticket windows and difficulties when booking tickets in advance.

Part of the playing surface was also replaced with the different type of grass which led to an unacceptable playing surface. As a result, the Round 14 St Kilda-Hawthorn game was transferred at 24 hours notice from Colonial Stadium to the MCG, a switch which caused regrettable inconvenience to the supporters of both clubs.

After several changes by Stadium Operations Limited, the owner and operator of Colonial Stadium, the venue functioned more efficiently in the second half of the season and reinforced our view that it offers terrific facilities for supporters and in the longer term, will be a major asset for the competition.

Stadium Australia

During May 2000, the AFL was advised by Stadium Australia that the work to reconfigure the venue for AFL matches would not be completed until March 2002.

Subject to entering into a user agreement, we had previously agreed to schedule 11 premiership season games at Stadium Australia from the 2001 season.

The reconfiguration of Stadium Australia is a \$50 million project and involves demolishing both ends of the Olympic venue and reducing the capacity in AFL mode to about 75,000.

Given our experience in using Colonial Stadium when it was not complete, we did not schedule games at Stadium Australia in 2001 but indicated our fixture was flexible should the venue meet our requirements.

The AFL remains committed to playing matches at Stadium Australia, but only if it is reconfigured to our requirements and is a first class facility for supporters to watch AFL games.

Discussions are continuing with Stadium Australia, but it is unlikely AFL matches will be scheduled there before the 2002 season.

Melbourne Cricket Club

Negotiations continued during the past year with the Melbourne Cricket Club and Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust following claims by those bodies for a share of the AFL's broadcasting rights.

This issue first arose during 1998 when the MCC indicated that it did not recognise the AFL's exclusive broadcast rights agreement with the Seven Network and that the MCC intended to deal in the the AFL's broadcast rights from 2001. This changed situation arose despite the various parties having entered into a 40-year agreement from 1992.

HANISH BLAIR - ALLSPORT





BEST FOOT FORWARD: Colonial Stadium was up and running in 2001, and despite some teething problems proved an attractive and popular venue for supporters. Chief Executive Officer Wayne Jackson worked hard to secure the best deal for AFL supporters.

Some two years ago, discussions started between the AFL and the MCC and MCG Trust as to how the AFL might be able to assist the MCC and MCG Trust with the continued development of the MCG. It soon became clear, however, that the MCC and MCG Trust were still demanding a share of the AFL's broadcasting rights and their demands were not linked to any particular re-development plan for the ground.

The AFL's position in relation to the MCG is as follows:

- The AFL is committed to the MCG as the primary venue for AFL matches including all Victorian 'big games' and the long-term home of the Grand Final.
- Directly and indirectly, the AFL, our clubs and supporters contribute between \$33 million and \$38 million of the Melbourne Cricket Club's annual revenue of about \$48 million.
- Current AFL related direct annual payments to the MCC are about \$5.8 million, plus match day costs of, on average, \$60,500 per game.
- The AFL's primary focus is on maximising support for our 16 AFL clubs and investing in national grassroots football development.
- Re-development of the Northern Stand, Ponsford Stand and the MCC members' pavilion at the MCG is not critical for football, but the AFL recognises that major stadia require regular upgrading to provide first-class facilities now demanded by attendees at sporting events.
- The AFL, therefore, supports the re-development of the Northern Stand at this time.
- The public capacity of the stadium should not be reduced.

The logical steps for the project are:

1. Establish a partnership between the AFL, Victorian Government, Melbourne Cricket Club and MCG Trust as occurred with the construction of the Great Southern Stand.
2. Establish the scope and cost of the project.
3. Establish a business plan for the project.
4. Establish the financial contribution from each participant.

- During 2000, the AFL indicated it was prepared to contribute \$4 million per year made up of a capital contribution of \$1 million per year for the next 32 years from the AFL with the balance coming from a user-pays levy on adults attending matches at the MCG. This equates to a present day value of \$90 million to \$100 million.
- The user-pays principle for stadia development applies at all other AFL venues via seat premiums and from 2001, a \$2 levy at Optus Oval. Adopting this approach at the MCG was therefore consistent with what is happening at all other stadia in Australia where AFL matches are played.
- The offer of \$4 million was made without any precise advice as to the extent of the project. The AFL is also the only organisation associated with the MCG which has indicated a willingness to contribute.
- The AFL will not link any contribution to the cricket club and trust to our broadcasting rights at the MCG or any other stadium where AFL matches are played.
- The AFL has 32 years to run on an existing contract which the MCC and MCG Trust have sought to break by their demand for a share of our broadcasting revenue.
- We also believe it is reasonable for the AFL to not be expected to contribute to the cost of facilities for MCC members or what is required for the Commonwealth Games in 2006. The AFL's focus is on facilities for our AFL clubs and their supporters and our need to invest in grassroots football.

Waverley Park

The AFL was disappointed with a decision of the Heritage Council of Victoria during August 2000, to add Waverley Park to the Victorian heritage register.

This, however, was the first step in what will now be a much lengthier process to achieve our ultimate objective of re-developing the Waverley Park site. The AFL's position is summarised as follows:

- Regardless of the heritage listing, AFL matches will not be scheduled at Waverley Park in the future.
- Waverley Park is by far the most significant asset of the AFL. It is critical that its full potential is realised so that the AFL can maximise financial support for AFL clubs and the long-term national development of grassroots football.
- By limiting the AFL's capacity to continue to invest substantially in the development of grassroots football, the AFL will not be able to provide the maximum opportunity for young people to participate in our game.
- Under the Heritage Act, the AFL can still pursue the re-development of Waverley Park.
- After following the appropriate process, the AFL will call for expressions of interest from any party wishing to submit a proposal for the use or development of the stadium and surrounding land. These proposals will, of course, be sensitive to any historical and/or other characteristics of Waverley Park.



SEASON 2000 AT A GLANCE AFL SEASON

AFL football remains as popular as ever, a fact highlighted by attendance figures during the 2000 Coca-Cola premiership season. A total of 5,740,811 fans went through the turnstiles in 2000, a drop of just 0.53 per cent from the 1999 season.

After a slow start to the season, it seemed fans wanted to save the best for last and the final three home and away rounds (rounds 20 to 22) each averaged more than 300,000. In round 22, 321,248 fans attended to make it the best-attended round of the season. Attendance records were set in rounds seven, nine, 13 and 20.

The Ansett Australia Cup attracted 325,736 fans (up 18.9 per cent) while 566,562 fans attended the Coca-Cola finals series (up 20 per cent).

In total, 6,633,109 fans attended games (Ansett Australia Cup, premiership season and finals) in 2000. This figure was 89,500 more than in 1999, a rise of 1.37 per cent.



Club membership remained high but did not quite reach the record levels of 1999. The 2000 figure of 438,504 was fractionally down on the 1999 figure (441,711), but still showed that supporters were well aware of the benefits of club membership. Geelong, Brisbane and Essendon recorded the biggest membership increases.

Essendon won its 16th AFL premiership and established many records that will take some beating. The Bombers won the most games in a season (24 out of 25) and the most games in succession (20). They made the best ever start to a season (20-0) and booted the highest ever finals score -- 31.12 (198) against the Kangaroos. Captain James Hird won the Norm Smith Medal for best afield in the Grand Final.

The signs were looking good for Essendon from the very start. The Bombers won the Ansett Cup, which was played for the first time in a round robin format. Dynamic forward Mark Mercuri was judged best afield in the Ansett Cup grand final against the Kangaroos and was awarded the Michael Tuck Medal.

Melbourne might have been humbled by the Bombers on Grand Final day, but it enjoyed a wonderful start to Grand Final week when Shane Woewodin won a tense Brownlow Medal count by

Carlton Football Club

During March 2000, the Carlton Football Club and Carlton Cricket and Social Club took legal action against the Seven Network to substantiate their right to deny Seven's access to Optus Oval.

Carlton Football Club also took legal action against the AFL seeking an order that the club was not in breach of its licence agreement with the AFL if it denied the Seven Network access to Optus Oval. In September 2000, the AFL, Carlton Football Club and Carlton Cricket and Football Club Social Club reached a settlement of their legal actions.

Key elements of the settlement included:

- The AFL is entitled to consider the interests of its free-to-air and pay-television broadcasters as paramount. The right of the Carlton Football Club to access any vision of AFL matches in which Carlton competes will be subject to there being no prejudice or diminution in the value of the free-to-air and/or pay-television broadcast rights or revenue of the AFL.
- Webcasting of matches involving Carlton will be restricted to people who have purchased a Carlton membership.
- Webcasting of matches involving the Carlton Football Club will only be available to Carlton Football Club members via the Carlton Football Club website at locations where there is no live or delayed broadcast of any such match by any free-to-air or pay-television broadcaster authorised by the AFL.

000 AT A GLANCE

two votes from the Western Bulldogs' Scott West. It was a triumph for the young midfielder who was overlooked in two drafts and has not missed a game for Melbourne since making his debut in 1997.

Australia scored a memorable win in the International Rules Series, taking out both matches against Ireland. The contests at Croke Park, Dublin, saw Australia show its considerable talent and skill, despite missing many big names who were in post-season recuperation. Essendon and Australian captain James Hird capped a wonderful season by winning the Jim Stynes Medal as the player of the series.



BROADCASTING RIGHTS

The successful negotiation of our broadcasting rights for the 2002 season and beyond was the most important item on our agenda during the past year.

In December 2000, the AFL Commission received bids from the Seven Network and a consortium headed by News Limited and consisting of the Nine and Ten free-to-air television networks and the Foxtel pay-television network.

After due consideration, the AFL Commission accepted the proposal submitted by the News Limited consortium. This meant that Seven had the right to match the offer for free-to-air television coverage.

The AFL's pay-television rights from 2002 were granted to Foxtel.

On January 25, 2001, the Seven Network advised the AFL that for strategic reasons, it had decided not to match the News Limited consortium's offer for the AFL's free-to-air rights and would pursue other programming opportunities.

Seven's decision brought to closure a 44-year partnership with the AFL. In 2001, Seven will broadcast its 45th season of AFL competition and advised the AFL that it intended to make it the best year ever.

The Seven Network has been a wonderful partner for football and we wish to acknowledge the contribution it has made to the development of the AFL as Australia's most popular national sporting competition.

A decision of this magnitude was a very difficult one for the AFL Commission but our agreement with our new partners in the News Limited consortium - the Nine Network, Ten Network and Foxtel supported by the News Limited group of newspapers - is an exciting opportunity for the continued development of the AFL game at all levels.

Our agreement with the consortium sets a new benchmark for broadcast rights in Australia and delivers the financial resources to promote the growth of our 16-team competition and to further develop the game at grassroots level. The News Limited consortium offered the best deal for fans, clubs and the game itself and was unanimously accepted by the AFL Commission.

Broadcasting revenue is the single largest income item for the AFL and underpins the finances of the competition. It is also fundamental to the AFL Commission's ability to optimise our annual distribution to AFL clubs (\$50.2 million in 2000) and invest in the development of grassroots football (\$15.2 million in 2000).

The development of new broadcast technology including digital and interactive television, the growth of pay television in Australia and the emergence of webcasting via the internet meant that the issues to be dealt with were much more complex than ever before.

As part of the process adopted by the AFL Commission to consider future broadcasting arrangements, our administration sought the advice of several major overseas sporting organisations including the NFL, Major League Baseball and National Hockey League in America and Premier League soccer in England. We also sought the advice of individuals with extensive experience in negotiating broadcasting rights for a variety of sports including the Olympic Games.

During 2000, the AFL Commission formed a broadcasting sub-committee chaired by our Chairman, Ron Evans, Commissioner, Graeme Samuel, and myself.

Our General Manager - Commercial Operations Ben Buckley, General Manager - Corporate Affairs and Communications Tony Peek, and legal advisor Jeff Browne supported the sub-committee. They were joined by Andrew Demetriou after he began with the AFL.

- In order to ensure that Carlton Football Club webcasting is specifically limited to the locations permitted, Carlton Football Club shall ensure that all Carlton webcasting is encrypted or otherwise confined to the area where there is no broadcast of any such match by any free-to-air or pay television broadcaster authorised by the AFL.
- Carlton Football Club will be entitled to engage in Carlton webcasting to a location where such match was broadcast by a free-to-air or pay-television broadcaster after a sufficient period of delay following completion of the relevant television broadcast so as not to prejudice or diminish the value of free-to-air and/or pay television.
- Carlton shall pay a fee to the AFL for the right to engage in Carlton webcasting in accordance with the agreement.
- Carlton Football Club agreed to be bound by the terms of the AFL's ground occupancy agreement as may be prescribed from time to time including the provision of unconditional and unrestricted access, free of charge, to all authorised content service providers and other media personnel authorised by the AFL and not allow access to any unauthorised content service as long as the AFL procures rights for audio and vision for Carlton under the terms of the agreement until 2006 and thereafter on terms which are no less favorable than those governing the provision of audio and vision to any other AFL club.
- The AFL agreed to allow Carlton Football Club and Carlton Cricket and Football Social Club to charge a development levy of \$2 to each non concession adult attendee and Carlton member attending each AFL match at Optus Oval up to and including the 2006 season.

The AFL as financier

The AFL's role in a financial sense is often misunderstood by those not familiar with the structure of the AFL competition and our relationship with the AFL clubs.

Our role is to act as a collective on behalf of our 16 AFL clubs and the game itself.

As a collective, we generate competition revenue from corporate sponsorship, broadcasting rights, licensed consumer products and the Coca-Cola AFL finals series and, after meeting the costs of running the competition, allocate our surplus to:

- Distributions to AFL clubs (\$50.2 million in 2000).
- Grants for national grass roots football development. (\$15.2 million in 2000).

This has been the fundamental point we have been emphasising during discussions about the re-construction of the MCG and the demand for a share of our broadcast rights by the Melbourne Cricket Club and Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust.

For every extra \$1 million demanded by the cricket club, the cost to each AFL club is \$62,500.

The AFL Commission's key priorities are to continue to invest in national game development programs, optimise distributions to AFL clubs and maintain affordable admission prices for AFL matches, particularly for families.

On Field

The Essendon Football Club created history by losing only one game – to the Western Bulldogs in round 21 – to be the most successful club in 104 seasons of our competition.



SEASON 2000 AT A GLANCE AFL SEASON

Australian Football Hall of Fame member Kevin Bartlett was elevated to Legend status in 2000. The former Richmond star, one of only two players to play more than 400 games, has joined 15 other former champions as Legends of the game.

Another eight members – seven former players and a media stalwart – were inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame. They were North Melbourne defender David Dench, Collingwood star forward Des Fothergill, North Melbourne Brownlow Medallist and inaugural West Coast Eagles captain Ross Glendinning, Geelong rover Bill Goggin, Melbourne and Sydney forward Gerard Healy, Carlton full-back Geoff Southby, Essendon ruck-rover Tim Watson and the late Geoff Christian, the *West Australian* newspaper's chief football writer for 28 years.



Media interest in the AFL was again high with more than 1200 media representatives accredited to cover the game via newspapers, magazines, radio and television. The number of accredited media representatives has increased six-fold over the past 11 years.

An important contributor in Essendon's outstanding 2000 was young full-forward Matthew Lloyd. The left-footer kicked 94 goals during the home and away season to win the Coleman Medal. He finished the year with 109 goals.

Television broadcasts of AFL matches attracted even bigger audiences in 2000. Between five and six million people regularly watched telecasts on the Seven Network. Special events such as the Brownlow Medal posted big ratings across the country.

Participation levels in Australian Football remain high with 391,782 players involved at various levels including Auskick, club (junior and senior), veterans' and women's competitions. High levels of participation are fundamental to the AFL's game development strategy.

Essendon opened the season by going through the Ansett Australia Cup undefeated and then won 20 Coca-Cola AFL premiership season games in succession before losing to the Bulldogs. Essendon's feat of 20 successive wins in a single premiership season broke the previous record of 18 successive wins set by Collingwood in 1929.

The club, led by captain James Hird, who had an outstanding season after battling for two years to overcome a stress fracture in his right foot, then marched on to win its 16th premiership and join Carlton as the club with the most Grand Final victories.

Hird won the Norm Smith Medal for best afield in the Grand Final while his teammate, Mark Mercuri, won the Michael Tuck Medal as best afield in the Ansett Cup Grand Final. Hird was also named captain of the Australian team which successfully toured Ireland during October, 2000. During that series, he won the Jim Stynes Medal as the outstanding player of the series.

Full-forward Matthew Lloyd completed the individual honors for Essendon by kicking 100 goals in a season for the first time and winning the John Coleman Medal also for the first time. Lloyd's tally of 109 goals was the first century by an Essendon full-forward since Geoff Blethyn kicked 107 goals in 1972. Lloyd also became the first Essendon player to top the goalkicking since Ron Evans, now the AFL Commission Chairman, in 1960. Essendon defeated Melbourne in the Grand Final. The Demons were well beaten on the day, but the club could be well satisfied with a season which saw it jump from 14th in 1999 to runners-up in 2000. Melbourne also produced its first Brownlow Medallist since Jim Stynes in 1991 when midfielder Shane Woewodin won the 2000 medal.

The All-Australian team completed a very successful tour of Ireland by winning both games of the Coca-Cola International Rules Series at Croke Park, Dublin. The two games were attended by some 95,000 people after last year attracting 110,000 people to games at the MCG and Football Park. The wonderful response from the football public of Ireland and Australia has given the AFL and the Gaelic Athletic Association great confidence for the future of the series.

Hall of Fame

The Australian Football Hall of Fame induction dinner was again a highlight of the past year.

Former Richmond champion Kevin Bartlett was elevated to the status of Legend of the game, the highest individual honor awarded to a player in the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

Bartlett played 403 games for Richmond between 1965 to 1983 and kicked 778 goals. He is a five-time best and fairest winner and played in five premiership teams.

Former players David Dench and Ross Glendinning, North Melbourne; the late Des Fothergill, Collingwood; Bill Goggin, Geelong; Gerard Healy, Melbourne and Sydney; Geoff Southby, Carlton and Tim Watson, Essendon, were inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The late Geoff Christian, a journalist with the *West Australian* newspaper, was also inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame for his service to the game as a member of the media.

Corporate partners

On behalf of the AFL Commission, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding support we have continued to receive from our corporate partners.

Our sponsors allow the AFL to keep admission prices among the lowest in the world for any major sport and also assist us to invest in national grassroots football development programs.

I wish to thank our following major corporate partners:

- Coca-Cola, the AFL's major naming rights sponsor.
- Seven Network, exclusive TV rights holder.
- Ansett Australia.
- Carlton and United Breweries.
- McDonald's.
- News Limited.
- Norwich Union Financial Services.

I would like to particularly thank our AFL staff for managing what at times was a very challenging season as well as everyone associated with our AFL clubs for their contribution to the 2000 season.

The contribution to our game by the 45,000 volunteers who tirelessly work for the benefit of community football throughout Australia should not be overlooked as they provide the foundation upon which Australian Football is built. We truly appreciate the efforts of our Australian Football volunteers.



Wayne Jackson,
Chief Executive Officer, Australian Football League

For the second successive year, retail sales of AFL licensed product was more than \$120 million. The AFL is the country's No. 1 consumer brand in sports licensed product with retail sales averaging more than \$2 million a week.

The AFL invested more than \$15 million in national game development programs during 2000. That funding included the second year of a major development strategy for NSW and the ACT and the establishment of an independent governing body – AFL Queensland – to grow the AFL game from grassroots upwards throughout Queensland.

Amid much anticipation and some controversy, Colonial Stadium hosted its first AFL game on March 9. Just over 43,000 fans saw Essendon easily defeat Port Adelaide while the Bombers' Michael Long went into the record books as the first player to kick a goal at the AFL's newest stadium. The average crowd at Colonial Stadium was 30,524.



2

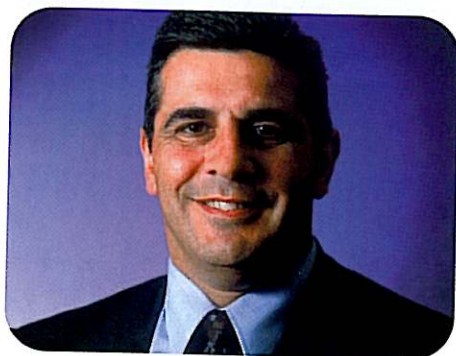


FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

ACTION: It's what happens on the field that holds our fascination. Pictured left, the Kangaroos' Glenn Archer (No. 11) and Wayne Carey have been two of the game's best players in the last decade, while contests between rivals such as Essendon and the Kangaroos (above) draw big crowds.

A U S T R A L I A N F O O T B A L L L E A G U E





GENERAL MANAGER - FOOTBALL OPERATIONS: Andrew Demetriou

A year of change, but a positive relationship with supporters remains fundamental to the growth of the game.

Football Operations is the AFL department primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of the 16-team AFL national competition, the flagship for Australian Football.

A vibrant national competition across all states is imperative if the AFL is to achieve continued strong expansion in the key northern markets of New South Wales and Queensland.

On the eve of the 2000 season, Football Operations underwent a major transformation with the resignation of General Manager Ian Collins after seven years in the position. Mr Collins became Chief Executive Officer of Stadium Operations Limited, the owner and operator of Colonial Stadium.

Former AFL Players' Association Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou stepped into the role mid-season with an agenda aimed at ensuring Football Operations was 'supporter friendly' in all its major initiatives.

A comprehensive review of AFL fixturing was undertaken, as well as an ongoing review of the laws of the game.

The early start to the 2000 Coca-Cola AFL premiership season, forced on the AFL because of the Olympic Games in Sydney in October, challenged football supporters to attend AFL matches earlier than ever before. The early start presented all sorts of scheduling difficulties and other unusual factors such as heat. This was particularly evident in the pre-season Ansett Cup.

Attendances were down at the start of the season, but rebounded strongly, and attendance figures totalled more than 6.3 million for the year, representing a rise of just over one per cent on 1999 figures and the third-best attendance total in the game's history.

In 2000, AFL matches were played for the first time at Colonial Stadium in Melbourne's Docklands precinct.

A considerable number of teething problems were encountered in the early matches at the ground and centred around ticketing and the ground's surface in particular.

These early-season issues sorely tested the patience of AFL supporters and placed a considerable workload on Football Operations.

By the end of the season, much progress had been made, enabling the venue to be embraced by football supporters.

Football Operations is well served by its senior managers in each department area - Administration (Rod Austin), Stadium Operations (Jill Lindsay), Investigations (Michael Easy) and Umpiring (Jeff Gieschen).

On the field, the game has continued to strive for new levels and Essendon established a stellar mark for achievement in 2000 with its 24-1 season, the best in the game's history. The Bombers dominated their three finals matches - against the Kangaroos, Carlton and finally Melbourne - to clinch their 16th premiership.

The Bombers began with a season record 20 straight victories (breaking Collingwood's 1929 record) after an undefeated run through the Ansett Cup competition. Captain James Hird won the Norm Smith Medal as best on ground in his side's 10-goal Grand Final victory over Melbourne, while teammate Matthew Lloyd claimed his first John Coleman Medal as leading goalkicker.

Melbourne's Shane Woewodin was a deserving winner of the Brownlow Medal, demonstrating a remarkable will to succeed after being ignored in two drafts as a teenager.

*'BY THE END OF THE SEASON,
MUCH PROGRESS HAD BEEN
MADE, ENABLING THE VENUE
TO BE EMBRACED BY
FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS'*



TONY FEDER - ALLSPORT

FINDING THEIR WAY: While there were teething problems with Colonial Stadium, the fans persevered and by season's end, were enjoying the advantages of football's newest venue.

At season's end, a team selected predominantly from the All-Australians, went to Ireland to contest the third series of Tests against Ireland. The first two series were close, with Ireland winning at home and away, but this time the Australians, led brilliantly by James Hird, were too strong, winning the series 2-0. Hird won the Jim Stynes Medal for best Australian player in the series. Ireland will visit Australia in 2001.

During the series in Ireland, an agreement was reached to extend the International Rules Series for another four years, with both the AFL and the Gaelic Athletic Association delighted at the way the event has been taken up by supporters in both countries.

Stadia

Over the course of the last 15 years, the AFL has been consciously moving towards rationalising the number of grounds at which AFL football is played. It is important to ensure that AFL matches are played at the best possible venues with the best possible conditions for players and spectators. Amenities for both the players - the stars of the game - and the supporters - the very basis of the game - must be paramount.

During 2000, major works were completed at the Gabba in Brisbane and Subiaco in Perth. New grandstands at each venue have enhanced the football experience significantly in Queensland and Western Australia.

As soon as the season was completed, work began at Football Park in Adelaide on a new 7000-seat grandstand, due to be completed in late June, 2001.

Stadium Australia in Sydney has already been used by other football codes and is being reconfigured to host AFL football in the future.

At the time of writing, the AFL was not prepared to play matches at the ground in 2001 but remains strongly committed to Stadium Australia as a key chip in the game's expansion into the lucrative western Sydney market, contingent on the ground being suitable for AFL football.

The most dramatic change regarding AFL grounds in the year 2000 was the introduction of Colonial Stadium in Melbourne's Docklands precinct.

The state-of-the-art \$460 million stadium hosted its first AFL match - Essendon v Port Adelaide in round one - just days after it was handed over by developer Baulderstone Hornibrook.

The lack of preparation time meant that potential problems could not be addressed before the intense focus of the season and led to considerable frustration for both the AFL and football supporters.

By season's end, many of these problems had been overcome and all people within football acknowledge the ground will be a wonderful showcase for the AFL game.

The AFL remains committed to the MCG as the spiritual home of football and host to all our big-drawing matches. To that end, football will assist in the MCC's plans for re-development of the Northern Stand when these plans are finalised during the course of 2001.

New AFL Finals System

The 2000 finals series was the first to be played under the new finals system in which the top four teams were all guaranteed a double chance.

For the first time since the old final-five system was last used (1990), football supporters could be certain before each finals match of the ramifications involved for victory and defeat. Melbourne's victory over Carlton in the first weekend of the finals ensured that Essendon and Carlton, which had both gone on long winning streaks during the home and away season, would not meet in the Grand Final.

While the meeting of an in-form Essendon and Carlton had looked a dream result during the latter stages of the premiership season, the match-ups of teams in similar positions on the table was strongly supported, with attendances up by 20 per cent on 1999 figures.

The nine finals games drew a total of 566,562 supporters.

Fixturing

A working group comprising AFL executives Wayne Jackson, Ben Buckley, Tony Peek, Rod Austin and Gillon McLachlan and chaired by Andrew Demetriou, conducted a detailed review of the fixturing process for the 2001 season.

This process saw the 2001 AFL fixture guided by six key objectives/principles:

1. Equity of on-field opportunity. The race to the finals is fair.
2. Consistent start times/day/nights for AFL matches in each capital/state.
3. Maximise attendances, including cultivating local rivalries and matches between big drawing clubs.
4. Maximise television audiences.
5. Ensure the fixturing system is easily understood by the public and other key stakeholders.
6. Ensure access to games against the bigger-drawing clubs is more evenly shared.

Once these principles were attended to, a simple, understandable and consistent schedule and timetable - days of the week and starting times - had to be created. This was implemented for 2001 and will continue in future seasons.

FANATICAL CROWDS: Despite a slow start to the season in terms of crowds, by year's end, there were big crowds as the finals' race hotted up.





'IN 2000, THE LIMIT FOR
TOTAL PLAYER PAYMENTS
WAS SET AT \$76 MILLION
- \$4.75 MILLION PER CLUB'



Tribunal

The AFL Tribunal was given a new definition for hearing 'charging' reports after a review of the wording of Law 15.4.4 (a) by the Laws Committee in the lead-up to the 2000 season.

Late in the 1999 season, the Tribunal, led by Chairman Brian Collis, sought a clear definition after several high-profile cases came before the panel.

The new Law 15.4.4 (a) now reads:

"A Charge means an act of colliding with an opposition player where the amount of physical force used is unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances, irrespective of whether the player is or is not in possession of the football or whether the player is within five metres of the football."

Another major change for the Tribunal during 2000 was the ruling whereby players could choose to accept automatic fixed penalties when reported for minor offences.

From round one, a player was able to plead guilty and receive a monetary penalty for a first offence on any of the following charges: abusive language, disputing a decision, interfering with a player kicking for goal, pinching, spitting, wrestling, shaking the goal post, deliberately kicking the ball into the roof of a stadium or time wasting.

In 2000, 200 reports were made, 131 were sustained, 39 not sustained and 30 withdrawn.

Of those charges 66 per cent were sustained, with suspensions totalling 96 matches and fines totalling \$195,900 ordered to be paid. The AFL Appeals Board was also available to sit on those occasions when clubs sought to contest Tribunal verdicts.

The Tribunal Chairman in 2000 was again Brian Collis QC, who began his appointment at the start of the 1998 season.

Other Tribunal members were Shane Maguire (deputy chairman), Elaine Canty, Emmett Dunne, Brian Le Brocq, Richard Loveridge and Prof David Shilbury.

The AFL Appeals Board was Peter O'Callaghan QC (chairman), Brian Bourke, Gavin Francis, Michael Green, John Schultz and Graham Sherry.

Tribunal Results 1986-2000

Season	Number of Reports	Sustained	Sustained & Reprimanded	Not Sustained (Withdrawn)	% Sustained
1986	105	40	13	52	50
1987	135	56	14	65	52
1988*	95	56	3	36	62
1989	92	52	-	40	57
1990	108	60	1	47	56
1991	94	58	1	35	63
1992	66	38	-	28	58
1993	102	57	-	45	56
1994	99	46	-	33	46
1995	82	52	-	30	63
1996	126	80	-	46	63
1997	164	110	-	54	67
1998#	154	100	-	37 (17)	65
1999	142	104	-	27 (11)	73
2000	200	131*	-	39 (30)	66
Average	117	69	2	41 (19)	61

* Indicates Neil Busse replaced Jack Gaffney as Chairman of the AFL Tribunal.

Indicates Brian Collis replaced Neil Busse as Chairman of the AFL Tribunal.

* In 2000, B. Young (Hawthorn) was fined and suspended for the same offence.

2000 AFL Tribunal Summary

Team	Players Coaches Charged	No. of Charges	Suspended	Fined	Not Sustained	Withdrawn
Adelaide	2	2			2	
Brisbane	3	4	2 (3 mtchs)		2	
Carlton	8	12	1 (4 mtchs)	6 (\$10,500)	5	-
Collingwood	3	4	1 (2 mtchs)	3 (\$3,900)	-	-
Essendon	17	26	5 (11 mtchs)	15 (\$48,200)	1	5
Fremantle	14	20	6 (15 mtchs)	8 (\$21,200)	1	5
Geelong	7	9	1 (1 mtch)	4 (\$7,700)	1	3
Hawthorn	11	15	3* (3 mtchs)	7* (\$15,200)	4	2
Kangaroos	12	18	4 (6 mtchs)	7 (\$13,100)	4	3
Melbourne	14	16	1 (2 mtchs)	11 (\$27,300)	3	1
Port Adelaide	6	8	4 (9 mtchs)	-	3	1
Richmond	5	7	4 (8 mtchs)	2 (\$2,400)	1	-
St Kilda	13	17	5 (11 mtchs)	5 (\$6,000)	5	2
Sydney	4	4	3 (5 mtchs)	-	1	
West Coast Eagles	13	22	4 (12 mtchs)	6 (\$13,900)	5	7
Western Bulldogs	11	16	3 (4 mtchs)	11 (\$26,500)	1	1
TOTALS	143	200	47 (96 mtchs)	85 \$195,900	39	30

* B. Young (Hawthorn) was fined and suspended for the same offence.

NB: Includes video reports, investigations and melee charges.

2000 Video Report Summary

Team	Players Coaches Charged	No. of Charges	Suspended	Fined	Not Sustained	Withdrawn
Adelaide	-	-				
Brisbane	2	2	1 (1 mtch)		1	
Carlton	7	10	1 (4 mtchs)	6 (\$10,500)	3	
Collingwood	1	1		1 (\$1,200)		
Essendon	14	17	3 (5 mtchs)	12 (\$35,000)		2
Fremantle	10	15	4 (11 mtchs)	7 (\$20,000)		4
Geelong	4	4		3 (\$6,500)		1
Hawthorn	9	9	2 (2 mtchs)	4 (\$8,200)	3	
Kangaroos	6	7	2 (3 mtchs)	4 (\$9,500)	1	-
Melbourne	10	10	-	8 (\$23,700)	2	-
Port Adelaide	3	3	2 (5 mtchs)		1	
Richmond	2	2	1 (2 mtchs)		1	
St Kilda	9	9	3 (6 mtchs)	4 (\$4,800)	2	-
Sydney	1	1			1	
West Coast Eagles	8	12	2 (4 mtchs)	6 (\$13,900)	1	3
Western Bulldogs	10	10	1 (1 mtch)	9 (\$22,500)		
TOTALS	96	112	22 (44 mtchs)	64 \$155,800	16	10

NB: Does not include investigations.



MAKING THE DECISIONS: On the AFL Tribunal, back row from left, are Richard Loveridge, David Shilbury, Brian Le Brocq, Shane Maguire, Emmett Dunne and (front) Elaine Canty and Brian Collis.

'OF 170 REPORTS, 66 PER CENT WERE SUSTAINED, WITH SUSPENSIONS TOTALLING 96 MATCHES AND FINES TOTALLING \$195,900 ORDERED TO BE PAID'

Laws of the Game Review

The Laws of the Game panel completed its major review of the Laws of Australian Football between the 1999 and 2000 seasons.

The new laws were forwarded to the AFL Commission in February 2000 and promulgated before the early start to the 2000 season.

A major discussion point had been the 'charging' law, which was brought into focus by several high-profile cases during the 1999 season.

The focus of the committee was to make the laws simpler to understand at all levels of the game and to make them relevant not only to AFL football.

The AFL Laws Committee at the time of the review's completion comprised: Ian Collins (chairman), Ed Biggs (non-voting), Kevin Bartlett, Andrew Demetriou, Paul Salmon, Robert Flower, Rowan Sawers and John Halbert. Note: Andrew Demetriou later replaced Ian Collins as Chairman when Mr Collins resigned from the AFL. Rob Kerr, CEO of the AFLPA, assumed a position on the committee in June 2000.

Total Player Payments

The AFL invests considerable time and resources in ensuring that the competition is conducted on a fair and equitable basis, and a key component of this policy is the strict maintenance of each club's Total Player Payments limit.

In 2000, the limit for Total Player Payments was set at \$76 million - \$4.75 million per club. The AFL Investigations Department, led by Investigations Manager Michael Easy, continually monitors each club's payments to players and works closely with clubs in regard to the application of AFL rules.

In 2000, several breaches, by a number of clubs, were uncovered. The Carlton Football Club was found to have breached the salary cap during the 1998 season and was also penalised in relation to lodgement of Additional Services Agreements for the 1999 season.

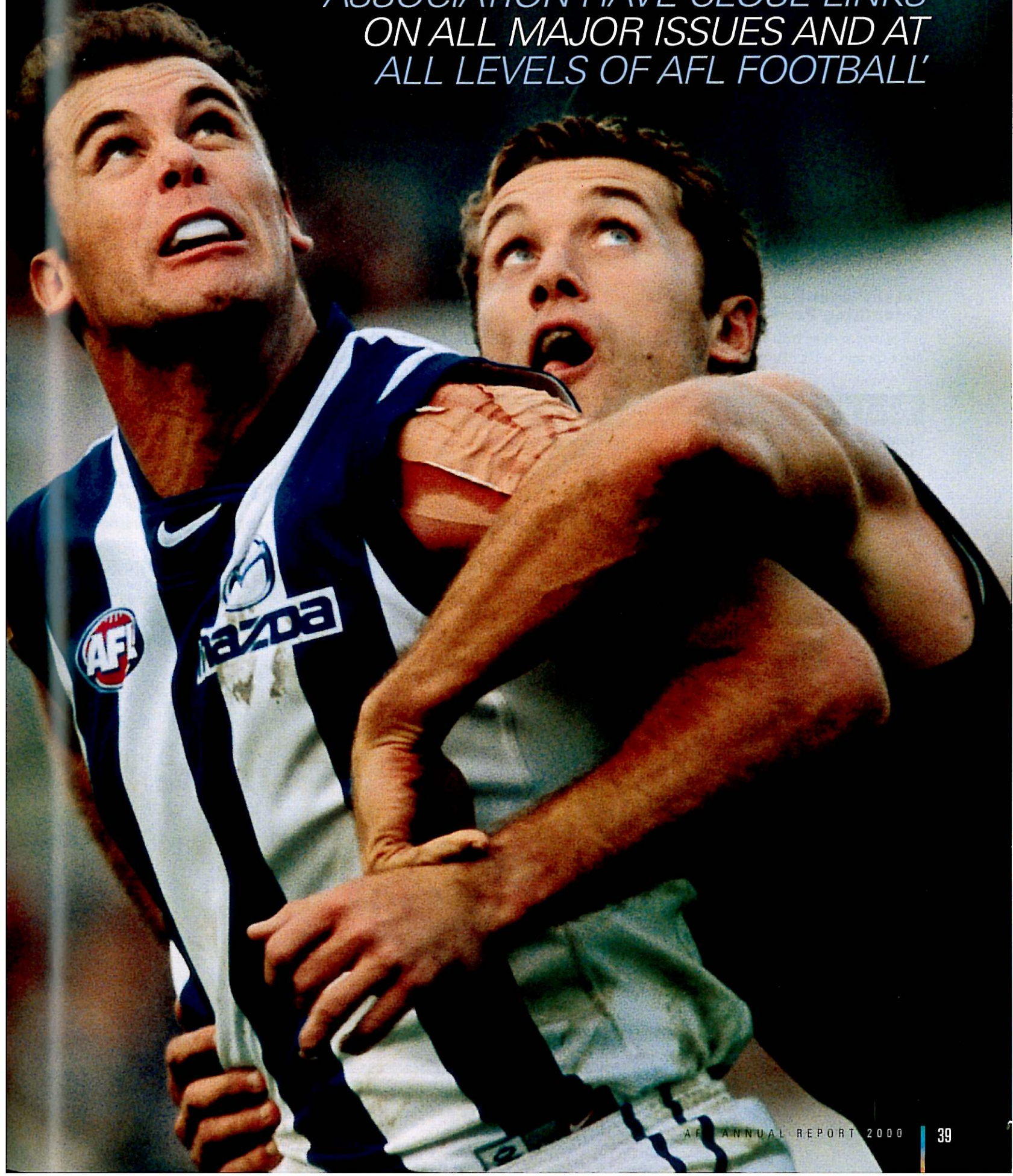
The club was fined a total of \$182,728, excluded from the December 2000 Pre-Season Draft and from rounds two and three of the 2001 AFL National Draft.

Of those penalties, \$57,576 and the 2001 National Draft sanctions were suspended until the end of the 2003 season. The Collingwood Football Club was fined a total of \$65,541



PLAYERS' MAN: Dr Rob Kerr (above) is the chief executive officer of the AFL Players' Association, which works closely with the AFL to ensure that the players' point of view is given full consideration in all football matters. Carlton's Anthony Koutoufides (right, behind) was named the AFL Players' Association most valuable player in 2000. The Kangaroos' Wayne Carey was awarded the All-Australian captaincy on the same evening.

*'THE AFL AND THE AFL PLAYERS'
ASSOCIATION HAVE CLOSE LINKS
ON ALL MAJOR ISSUES AND AT
ALL LEVELS OF AFL FOOTBALL'*





for breaching the player rules during the 1997 season and for failing to lodge contract information within the required time frames during the 1998 season.

The Kangaroos and the Brisbane Lions were fined \$35,000 and \$7500 respectively for breaches of the player rules in relation to lodgement of agreements and contracts.

The AFL's rigorous attention to its Total Player Payments for clubs has been crucial in ensuring each club starts the season with a realistic hope of reaching the finals and has been the model for most other national competitions in Australia in recent years.

Total Player Payments Smoothing Process

The continued rising costs across all areas of football are of major concern to the AFL. The Collective Bargaining

Agreement (CBA) between the AFL and the AFL Players' Association addresses the key area of Total Player Payments to insure against rampant inflation.

In the 2000 season, and again for the upcoming 2001 season, the CBA specifically details a 'smoothing formula', outlining the trend for player payments over a five-year period. This formula was introduced in anticipation of an increase in broadcast rights from 2002 onwards.

Total Player Payments for 2000 rose from \$68 million in 1999 (\$4.25 million per club) to \$76 million (\$4.75 million).

In 2001, this figure will increase again - to \$83 million (\$5.185 million per club).

Part of the expected revenues (approximately \$11.6 million) from the next broadcast rights agreement, which dates from 2002 onwards, have been paid in advance to

Total Player Earnings 1998-2000

Football Year	Gross Player Payments \$	Finals/ Ansett Cup/ Relocation & Allowances \$	Development/ Merger Allowances \$	Veteran's Allowance 50% Deduction \$	Total Deductions \$	Player Payments Less Deduction \$	Injury Allowance \$	TPP Limit \$	Margin/ (Excess) \$	Additional Services Agreements \$	Average Gross Player Earnings \$
1998	62,186,000	1,093,000	991,000	N/A	2,084,000	60,102,000	8,176,000	52,400,000	474,000	N/A	101,957
1999	71,985,000	1,073,000	838,000	1,721,000	3,632,000	68,353,000	5,688,000	68,000,000	5,335,000	N/A	117,398
2000	80,951,208	844,209	1,112,500	2,549,017	5,152,525	75,798,683	3,500,608	76,000,000	3,701,925	3,413,383	Listed 126,996 Played 140,295
Movement (%)											
1999-2000	12.46%	(21.32%)	32.76%	48.11%	41.86%	10.89%	(38.46%)	11.76%	(30.61%)		

1 Veteran's Allowance is 50% of Total Contact Value.

2 Average gross player earnings for 1998 and 1999 are for players who played one or more senior match during the year.

Summary of AFL Player Earnings 1990-2000

Year	\$0 - \$60,000	\$60,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$200,000	\$200,001 - \$300,000	\$300,001 - \$400,000	\$400,001 - \$500,000	\$500,000+	TOTAL	Average Gross Player Earnings
1990	442	88	8	0	0	0	0	538	\$41,871
1991	448	100	17	0	0	0	0	565	\$46,212
1992	409	125	19	1	0	0	0	554	\$47,940
1993	373	126	33	1	0	0	0	533	\$50,910
1994	337	147	45	1	0	0	0	530	\$58,609
1995	307	162	91	9	0	0	0	569	\$70,005
1996	260	173	126	12	2	0	0	573	\$77,698
1997	178	217	159	17	5	0	0	576	\$91,448
1998	152	191	209	26	5	0	0	583	\$101,957
1999	121	143	249	52	7	4	0	576	\$117,398
<i>Earnings detailed above relate only to players who participated in at least one senior match during the season.</i>									
2000									
Listed	159	142	245	80	22	7	3	658	\$126,996
Played	87	132	237	80	22	7	3	568	\$140,295

players through Total Player Payments to ensure a gradual and smooth increase, rather than a single massive jump between the 2001 and 2002 seasons.

In this manner, the AFL will 'claw back' the money paid in advance to Total Player Payments in the initial years of the next broadcast rights agreement, with increases consistent for the previous years for the 2002 and 2003 seasons.

The AFL and the AFLPA have agreed to negotiate on these future increases during the first half of 2001, with a deadline set for June 30.

AFLPA Relationship

The AFL and the AFL Players' Association have close links on all major issues and at all levels of AFL football.

The two bodies work closely together on matters of player education, such as the Anti-Doping Code and the Racial and Religious Vilification Code, as well as preparing young players entering the competition with the introduction of a new annual induction camp.

The AFL is mindful of the importance of consultation with the AFLPA on major issues such as fixturing and broadcasting rights to ensure the views of the players are taken into account.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the AFL and the AFLPA has three seasons still to run after being formally signed on June 3, 1999.

Racial and Religious Vilification

The AFL remains strongly committed to a policy of education as the best method of fighting racism and/or religious vilification within the game.

All players and club officials again attended Racial and Religious Vilification Code education sessions in the lead-up to the 2000 premiership season, guaranteeing that new players in the competition were aware of their responsibilities.

On a wider note, the AFL strongly supported the December 3 Reconciliation March in Melbourne with CEO Wayne Jackson, along with AFL staff and their families, joining many AFL stars among the estimated 200,000 walkers.

Anti-Doping Code

An infraction notice under the AFL's Anti-Doping Code was issued to one player during the season - the West Coast Eagles' Nick Stone.

Stone was charged with returning a positive test for the substances amphetamine and methamphetamine and was found guilty by the AFL Tribunal and suspended for six matches.

Four hundred tests were conducted during 2000, the majority of them out of season. In a joint project with the AFL Players' Association, the AFL works to ensure that all players have access to the most comprehensive information regarding the AFL's Anti-Doping Code.



IN FOCUS: The game is seen from every angle by all forms of media. It is important that the AFL applies the highest possible standards to players' on-field conduct.

2000 Umpires & Games

	2000 Games	Total
Brett Allen	25	175
Michael Avon	12	17
Troy Burton	14	50
Andrew Coates	21	206
Gavin Dore	24	246
Martin Ellis	18	76
Richard Fox	11	11
Darren Goldspink	25	226
Steven Hanley	19	75
John Harvey	23	148
David Howlett	18	289
Derek Humphery-Smith	20	60
Mathew James	9	21
Ramon Kelsey	13	24
Hayden Kennedy	25	258
Stephen McBurney	19	98
Darren McCauley	11	64
Shane McInerney	20	93
Mark McKenzie	22	103
Scott McLaren	25	125
Chris Mitchell	23	299
Darren Morris	12	23
Mark Nash	17	144
Kieron Nicholls	13	26
Matthew Norden	7	69
Brett Rosebury	7	7
Corin Rowe	13	26
Justin Schmitt	18	33
Vince Sercia	14	58
Bryan Sheehan	24	306
Michael Vozzo	18	31
Stuart Wenn	19	76



UNDER THE SPOT LIGHT: An expert in biomechanics helped umpires improve their ball-bouncing skills in 2000.

The AFL Commission remains committed to a central tenet that "ensures the AFL competition is conducted on the basis of athletic prowess and natural levels of fitness and development and not pharmacologically enhanced performance".

Umpiring

The AFL Umpiring Department has a prime objective of ensuring that its standards rise to meet the continued growth in the speed and the skills displayed by the players.

Structural changes were made before the start of the 2000 season to staff and coaching personnel, combined with a strong philosophy on the direction of umpiring, to achieve the goals of higher skill and fitness levels and better communication.

In 2000, a number of key performance indicators improved on previous seasons, particularly the important areas of decisional accuracy and bouncing the ball. Both rose by three per cent.

A bio-mechanist expert contributed greatly with bouncing skills while the use of lap-top computers and CD-ROMs assisted specific coaching and feedback sessions.

Relations with the AFL clubs have been strenuously addressed with the aim of developing close and more open lines of communication, enabling better understanding of roles for both umpires and players/coaches.

A number of senior umpires achieved landmark feats in 2000:

Bryan Sheehan	300 games
Hayden Kennedy	250 games
Andrew Coates	200 games

All three umpires have been excellent servants of the game and provide great leadership to the senior umpire group.

Brett Allen was named All-Australian umpire for the second successive year while the Grand Final umpires for 2000 were Brett Allen, Darren Goldspink and Hayden Kennedy. All three performed at a consistently high standard.

New umpires selected on the list for season 2000 were Kieron Nicholls (Vic), Brett Rosebury (WA), Michael Avon (SA) and Richard Fox (SA). All acquitted themselves well and will benefit from the experiences of senior football.

Four umpires retired at the end of the season. They were Vince Sercia, Matthew Norden, Darren McCauley and Troy Burton.

The challenge to produce better performances remains ever present, but the AFL remains confident the standard of umpiring will continue to improve.

Medical Report

The AFL leads all sports in Australia with its comprehensive study of injuries at the highest level of the game.

The AFL commissioned and released its eighth report, by Dr John Orchard and Dr Hugh Seward of the AFL Medical Officers' Association, on injuries sustained during the 1999 season.

It revealed a reduction in injuries, as against 1998, and presented a progress finding into the relationship between ground hardness and injuries. In player terms, 6.4 senior list players were injured per week in 1999, compared with 6.7 players in 1998 and 7.5 players in 1997.

Hamstring injuries remained the most common injury and caused the most number of games to be missed. Research into hamstring injuries is one of several projects the AFL is funding in 2001.

Research and Development

During the 2000 season, the AFL Medical Research and Development Program completed its initial four studies into areas of specific interest that affect the 16 AFL clubs and the game overall.

Chaired by Fremantle CEO David Hatt, the research board was established to ensure the AFL's technological and educational base continues to expand.

The board, comprising leading sports specialists and football figures, allocates up to \$100,000 each year for four studies to be funded.

In 2001, the projects to be examined will be:

- Decision-making in football.
- The value of pre-season hamstring conditioning in preventing hamstring injuries at community-level Australian Football.
- The mechanism of quadriceps muscle strains during kicking.
- The value of immediate post-match warm-downs.

These four studies will be delivered to the AFL late in 2001 and then passed on to the AFL clubs and football in general for evaluation.

Victorian State League

The 2000 season marked the first year in which teams from the former AFL reserves competition joined with clubs from the Victorian Football League (VFL).

The immediate impact was significant in all areas – playing standards, attendances, media coverage and 'football goodwill'.



VICTORY: Sandringham's Jamie Shanahan celebrates victory in the TXU-VFL 2000 Grand Final with a young Demons supporter.

The new VFL competition saw an immediate increase in the quality of players and the on-field standard of play was very high. Attendances were strong and the League benefited greatly from increased media coverage.

Most importantly, the VFL also represented an amalgam of AFL club reserve sides, former VFL sides and joint ventures between AFL and VFL clubs.

Geelong, Collingwood, Carlton, Richmond, Essendon and St Kilda fielded stand alone reserve sides while Hawthorn (Box Hill), Melbourne (Sandringham) and the Western Bulldogs (Werribee and Williamstown) formed strong alliances with VFL clubs, and the Kangaroos established the Murray Kangaroos.

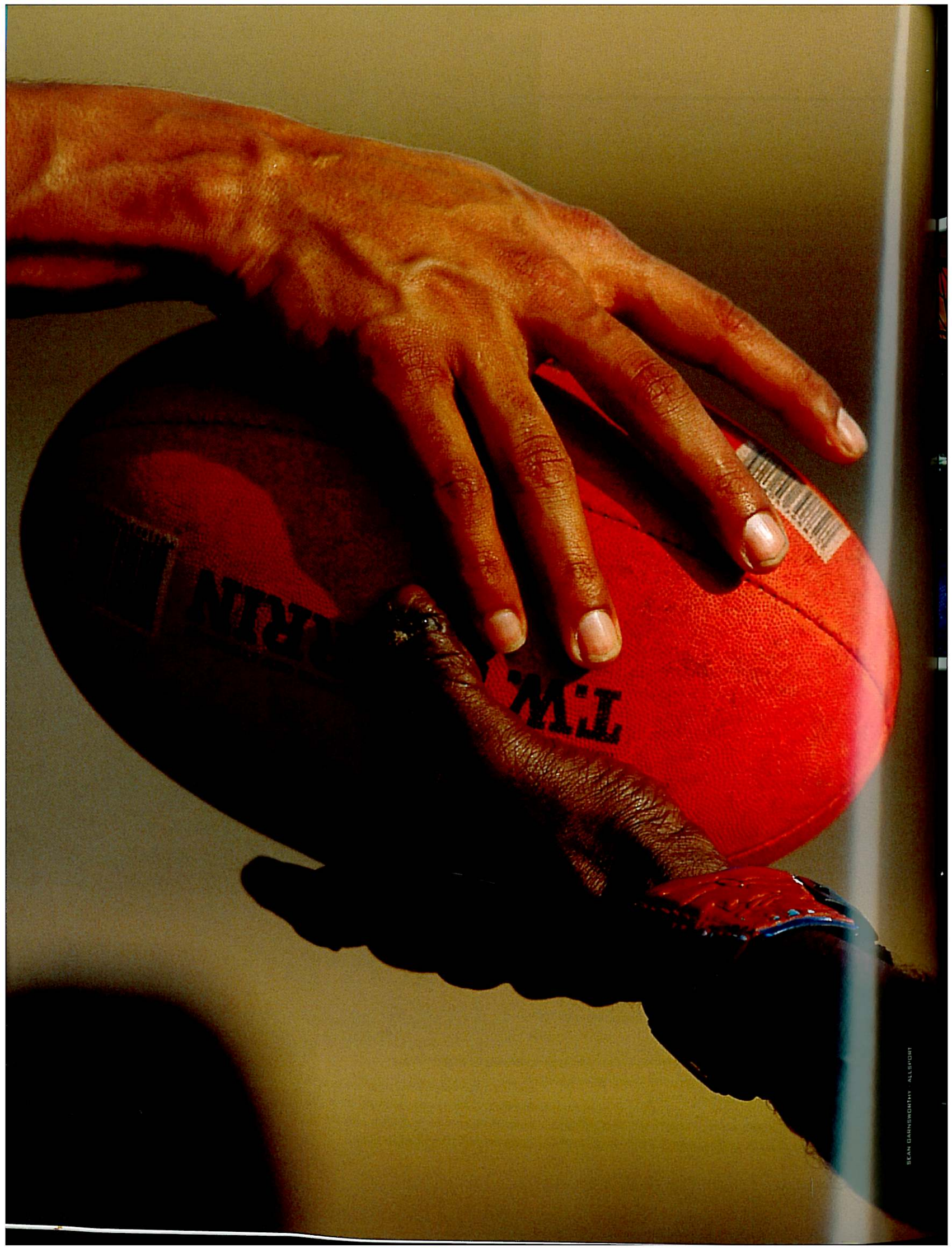
In 2001, the Western Bulldogs will join with Werribee, Collingwood with Williamstown, St Kilda with Springvale and Richmond with Coburg as joint venture partnerships in the State League after the success achieved by Hawthorn and Melbourne with their arrangements.

Club Lists

AFL club lists have been reduced to 38 players for the 2001 season as part of the successful introduction of the Victorian State League.

AFL lists have been reduced so that clubs can focus their activities on the senior national competition side only, allowing other players to return to state leagues and regional competitions.

The Victorian State League has benefited greatly from the influx of AFL players and only three AFL clubs will field stand-alone sides in 2001 in the VFL State League – Essendon, Carlton and Geelong.



3

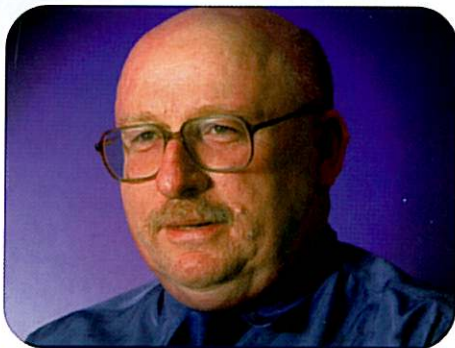


CORPORATE AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

IMAGES OF A GREAT GAME: Coach and player interact at Weipa (left) in far north Queensland. A new home for the AFL (above) at Colonial Stadium.

A U S T R A L I A N F O O T B A L L L E A G U E





GENERAL MANAGER – CORPORATE AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS: Tony Peek

Strategic Planning is fundamental to the growth of the AFL game at all levels, in all states

Much of the past year for the AFL Commission and administration was devoted to dealing with a number of issues of strategic importance to the long-term future of the AFL competition, the 16 clubs and the game itself.

The role of AFL Corporate Affairs and Communications continued to involve the management of the strategic planning process in conjunction with other AFL departments, media relations, publishing and the AFL's official website, afl.com.au including AFL statistics. Publishing and the website were transferred to AFL Commercial Operations during the year, consistent with the AFL's administrative re-organisation.

Strategic planning is co-ordinated by General Manager – Corporate Affairs and Communications Tony Peek, AFL Commissioner Colin Carter and strategic planner Gillon McLachlan. McLachlan joined the AFL in 2000 from Andersen Consulting, replacing Andrew Catterall who returned to the Boston Consulting Group after being on secondment to the AFL.

Major strategic issues included:

- Development of a broadcasting strategy for 2002 and beyond.
- Development of a strategy for future growth of the AFL in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.
- Development of a three-year corporate plan for the AFL.

Broadcasting

The AFL Commission's key objectives were to:

- Maximise free-to-air exposure for the AFL game in capital city markets and in regional Australia,

supplemented by pay-TV, to give supporters every opportunity to watch their team on television if they are unable to attend a game.

- Secure AFL match coverage and associated programming on pay-TV platforms to maximise the exposure for the game via this medium, particularly in the developing markets of New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland.
- Build on the AFL's position as Australia's most valuable television sports property in terms of national audiences and take advantage of opportunities from new technology – digital television, the internet – to enhance the value of the AFL's broadcasting rights and exposure of the game for the benefit of all supporters.
- Adopt appropriate policies for the provision of content for afl.com.au and AFL club websites which do not cannibalise the value of the AFL's free-to-air and pay-television rights.
- Leverage opportunities to enhance the marketing, promotion and development of the AFL competition and the game itself.

The AFL Commission's broadcasting strategy was the result of work undertaken by the AFL executive for more than the past two years. It involved consulting with a wide range of major sporting organisations, including the National Football League, Major League Baseball and National Hockey League in America and Premier League soccer in England, to better understand their approach to broadcasting.

We also consulted with individuals from Australia and overseas with extensive experience in negotiating broadcasting rights for other football codes and the Olympic Games.

'FOR THE AFL TO BUILD ON ITS REPUTATION AS AUSTRALIA'S LEADING NATIONAL SPORTS COMPETITION, STRONG GROWTH IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (AND QUEENSLAND) IS ESSENTIAL'

The development of pay-television in Australia, the emergence of the internet as a communications medium and the introduction of digital television in Australia meant that the issues associated with the AFL's future broadcasting arrangements were much more complex than had been the case until the mid to late 1990s, when the focus was solely on free-to-air television.

NSW Growth

For the AFL to build on its reputation as Australia's leading national sports competition, strong growth in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (and Queensland) is essential. Strong growth will also increase future revenue streams and allow the AFL to optimise its financial support for the 16 AFL clubs and to continue investment in the development of grassroots football.

Establishing strong growth and critical mass in the following areas is therefore fundamental to the AFL Commission's strategy for the region:

- Participation in the AFL game at grassroots level, from AFL Auskick upwards.
- Broad community interest and participation in the game.
- Attendances at AFL matches.
- Television audiences in metropolitan Sydney/regional New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory.
- Radio audiences.
- Club memberships.
- Sale of AFL consumer products.
- Corporate support.
- Broadcast revenue.
- Government support.
- The number of athletes from the region who are ultimately drafted to the AFL.



THE FOCUS: Growing Australian Football in New South Wales, the ACT and Queensland are one of the AFL Commission's priorities.

The AFL Commission recognises that growing many of these areas requires a generational change and significant long-term investment.

The AFL Commission's strategy for growth in NSW and the ACT during the period 2001-2005 consists of the following broad elements:

- Continuing to utilise the Sydney Swans as the major driver of interest in the AFL competition and AFL game.
- Continuing to invest in game development programs via the AFL (NSW-ACT) Commission.
- Showcasing the AFL game in Sydney/frequency of major AFL matches in the Sydney market/quality of AFL experience.
- Aggressive marketing of the AFL game in the region.



During the past 12 months, the profile of the AFL competition has been boosted by a number of AFL clubs entering into sister club arrangements with local Sydney AFL clubs including:

- Essendon – North Shore.
- Richmond – Balmain.
- West Coast Eagles – East Coast Eagles (formerly Baulkham Hills).
- Adelaide – St George.
- Western Bulldogs – Eastern Suburbs/University of NSW.
- Kangaroos – Campbelltown.

The Port Adelaide and Melbourne Football Clubs are also considering sister club relationships in Sydney.

The Kangaroos will continue to have a strong presence in the region by playing two Coca-Cola AFL premiership season games at Manuka Oval in Canberra and two matches at the SCG.

During last season, the AFL and the Kangaroos reviewed the results of the club playing home matches in Sydney in the past two years and agreed that while the club had attracted increased support from individuals and the corporate sector, the outcomes could have been better. During the review, Canberra was identified as the next most logical city in which to play a select number of home matches.

The Kangaroos, with the support of the ACT Government, have agreed to play matches in Canberra for the next three seasons.

Two Ansett Cup matches – between the Kangaroos and St Kilda and the Sydney Swans and Essendon – were scheduled to be played in Canberra in 2001 as well as two premiership season games involving the Kangaroos.

Corporate Plan

The AFL Commission has identified four key objectives to guide the AFL's corporate plan which will be considered in further detail by the Commission during the first quarter of 2001.

The four key objectives are:

1. To manage effectively the national competition.
2. To develop the game to be the number one participant sport in Australia.
3. To promote high levels of public interest in the AFL competition and the game by building the strongest consumer brand in Australian sport.

4. To develop strategies and policies which provide financial stability for the AFL competition, its member clubs and other relevant stakeholders.

A different approach has been taken with the preparation of the corporate plan to that taken by the AFL Commission in 1995 when it published its five-year plan.

This time, it will be a rolling plan, updated annually and will be based strongly on measurable and time specific key performance indicators.

The main issues for consideration by each AFL department in 2001 include:

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

- Review new fixturing/scheduling process adopted for 2001.
- Conduct thorough review of operational rules and policies, including the AFL National Draft and the Collective Bargaining Agreement, with the AFL Players' Association.
- Implement new agreement with the Australian Sports Drug Agency.
- Develop a strategy to assist AFL clubs primarily based in Victoria to improve their player and administrative facilities.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

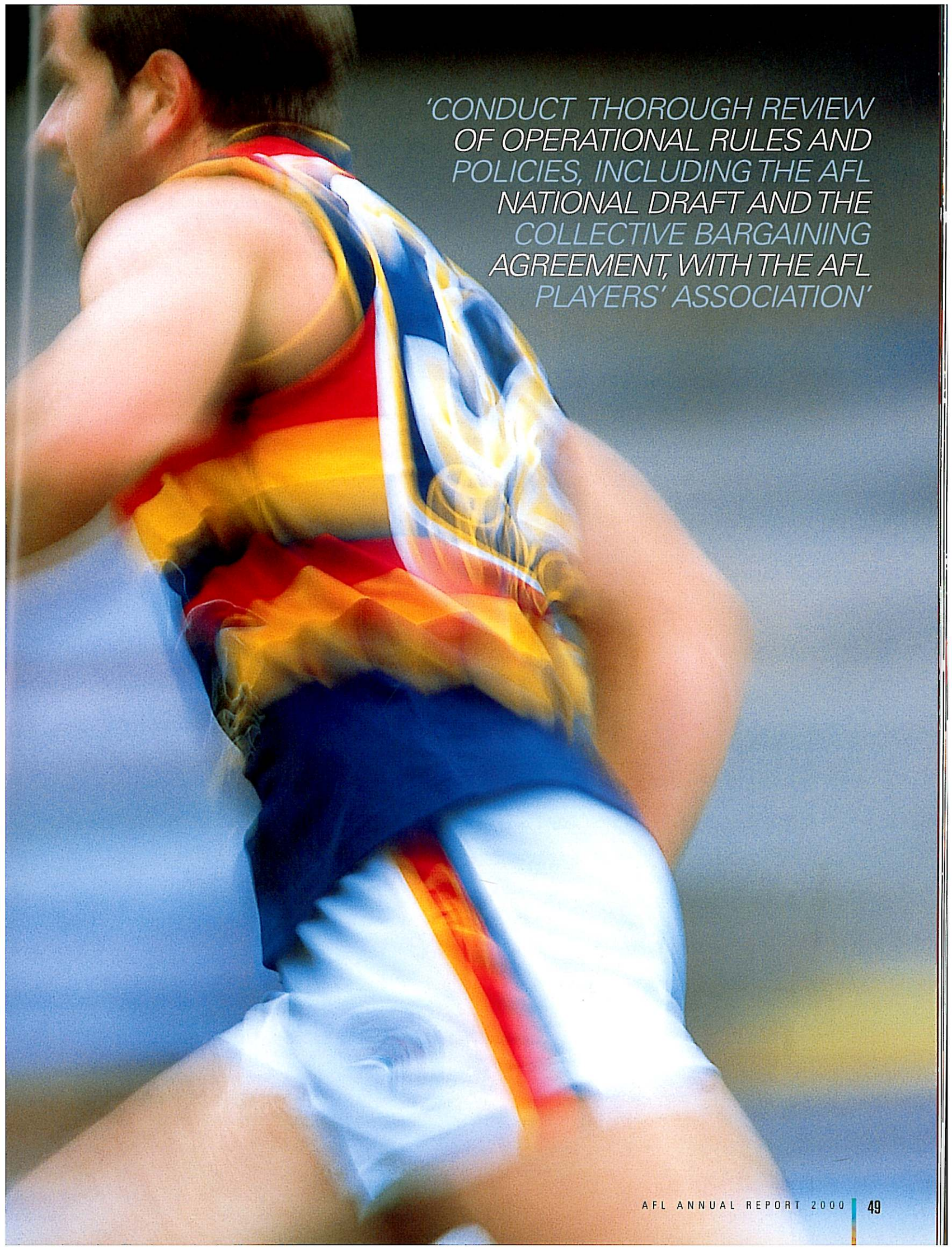
- Develop policies for consideration by the AFL Commission for future distributions to AFL clubs and investment in national game development programs.
- Conduct thorough review into finances of the competition, trends for AFL clubs, financial link to state bodies.
- Strategy for the sale of Waverley Park.

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

- Review and develop sponsorship strategy.
- Review finals ticketing arrangements, including allocation to members of competing clubs for implementation in 2002 season.
- Develop a new media strategy including e-commerce.
- Develop and implement a national marketing plan.

CORPORATE AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

- Review current list of issues to be considered as part of the strategic planning process.



'CONDUCT THOROUGH REVIEW
OF OPERATIONAL RULES AND
POLICIES, INCLUDING THE AFL
NATIONAL DRAFT AND THE
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
AGREEMENT, WITH THE AFL
PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION'



- Develop and implement media relations, public relations, community relations and government relations strategies.
- Implement an updated media relations policy.

GAME DEVELOPMENT

- Develop and implement a strategic plan for national game development.
- Increase overall participation rates.
- Implement national AFL Auskick program.

Re-organisation Continues

In line with the AFL administration's re-organisation which started in 1999, further change occurred during 2000 when AFL Publishing and the AFL's highly successful website, afl.com.au, came under the AFL's Commercial Operations department.

This re-alignment was entirely consistent with a key principle of the re-organisation – that all areas of the AFL which generate competition revenue, other than broadcasting, should report via Commercial Operations.

The major task of AFL Publishing is the publication of the *AFL Record*, our official matchday program which was established in 1912 and is now Australia's largest-selling sports magazine.

Media Relations

More than 1200 journalists, photographers, television and radio broadcasters and production crews were accredited to cover the AFL competition in 2000.

AFL Media Relations Manager Patrick Keane is responsible for day-to-day contact with the media on behalf of the AFL as well as:

- Administering the AFL Commission's media relations policy which details how AFL clubs and players should deal with the media.
- Arranging media conferences and releases.
- Liaising with the Australian Football Media Association.
- Coordinating the provision of media facilities at various AFL venues.

New media facilities opened at Subiaco Oval as part of the re-development of that ground and were welcomed by television, press and radio. It is to be hoped that new or improved media facilities can be included in the proposed upgrading of the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Community Relations

Eloise Stinear was promoted to the position of Public and Community Relations Manager in 2000 from her previous role as Media Relations Coordinator.

The basic philosophy behind the AFL placing an emphasis on community relations is simple. If the AFL wants the broader community to embrace the game and our AFL clubs, the AFL needs to embrace the community in return.

The AFL supports a number of major charities and other worthwhile organisations and part of Eloise Stinear's role is to ensure this support is promoted more effectively.

During 2000, a number of public relations initiatives were developed, including the provision of Fact Sheets covering all areas of the AFL's operations and procedures – created in response to the multitude of public inquiries. The Fact Sheets are available via the AFL's website, afl.com.au.

The public and community relations strategy will be implemented during 2001 as part of a total communications plan for the AFL which has been developed by the Commercial Operations and Corporate Affairs departments.

AFL SportsReady funds helping to grow the game

Over the past six years, the AFL has put almost \$2 million back into its clubs and the game via the AFL Group Training Company, AFL SportsReady Ltd. The scheme has won national acclaim for its assistance to young men and women seeking positions in the workforce.

Many of those young Australians are AFL footballers who are employed within the football industry in jobs ranging from administration and retail duties to preparing recreational arenas and playing fields. This allows them to work to a timetable that will accommodate their playing and training commitments.

Some of the better-known players to have undertaken a traineeship include Hawthorn's Trent Croad, the Brisbane Lions' Justin Leppitsch, Adelaide's Andrew McLeod and Port Adelaide captain Matthew Primus. Last year young Collingwood star Josh Fraser completed a traineeship with The AFL Store at Northland Shopping Centre in Melbourne.

Some clubs have their own initiatives and training programs but the beauty of the AFL SportsReady scheme is that it allows players to be trained in life skills which will be beneficial after they finish their playing careers.

Football fans contribute to the scheme by paying a \$1 levy on finals tickets. The money is managed by AFL SportsReady, passed on to the employer by way of a subsidy to help players and other young men and women undertake a traineeship under the Federal Government's New Apprenticeship Scheme.

Fifteen AFL clubs take advantage of that opportunity and provide workplace training for their players. Last year, 317 men and women participated in the program.



AFL COMMISSION ENDORSES INVESTMENT IN QUEENSLAND

The second major component of the AFL Commission's plan to boost the development of Australian Football in the northern states of Australia came during 2000 when a series of recommendations for the future growth of the game in Queensland were accepted by the Commission. As a consequence, the AFL has increased significantly its investment in AFL Queensland.

In 2000, the AFL almost doubled its investment from just over \$1m to \$2m as reforms were phased in. In 2001, in a full year, the investment will increase to \$3m. This will bring the total funds spent on AFL game development in Queensland to \$3.7m. This includes sponsorship as well as support from the Queensland Government through the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing.

Major investment is in:

- Participation programs at all levels, including ensuring the quality of the programs and resources.
- Administration and human resources.
- The formation and initial support of major football competitions.

The investment is a direct result of the recommendations made by a committee appointed in June 1999, charged with the responsibility of:

- Reviewing the current structure of football in Queensland and to recommend an appropriate structure for the growth of AFL football.
- Identifying the strategic issues for expanding AFL football in Queensland.

The committee received 97 submissions from all levels of the football and general communities, visited all regions of the state and met with representatives from regional and state football clubs and organisations, local government, media and business representatives.

Key recommendations from the review committee included:

- Establishment of an independent state governing body for the AFL – AFL Queensland – to be guided by a seven-person board appointed by the AFL.
- Formation of a new eight-team state league with clubs participating under licence from AFL Queensland. The new state league came into effect during 2000.
- Formation of an expanded south-east Queensland competition to support the state league. AFL South Queensland also started in 2000.
- Support for all regional bodies and in, particular, special support for remote communities in the Cape York region.
- Introduction of a state development plan and appointment of appropriate staff to achieve a significant increase in participation for both primary and secondary school-aged children during the next three to five years.
- Refinement of programs specifically targeted at identifying, recruiting and nurturing potentially elite players.
- Devising a promotion campaign to create greater awareness and interest in AFL football in Queensland.

In overall participation rates at both junior and senior level, the AFL ranks behind rugby league and soccer and, at the senior level, behind rugby union. However, the AFL has performed very strongly over the last 10 years in particular.

The success of AFL football was a key plank in the \$131 million redevelopment of the Gabba, increasing the capacity of the stadium by nearly 100 per cent.

Attendances at Brisbane Lions matches have continued to set regular records since the team based itself in Brisbane, and this is reflected in club membership levels. Membership of the Lions rose by more than 16 per cent during 2000 to nearly 20,000 members – the largest membership base of any sporting team in Queensland. Television audiences in Queensland doubled during the 1990s.

The value of the AFL's broadcasting rights has also significantly increased as a result of our progress in NSW and Queensland, a benefit enjoyed by all 16 AFL Clubs. All AFL clubs also benefit by the value of their major sponsorships being enhanced by national television exposure.

In its role as "keeper of the code", the AFL Commission recognises that the so-called traditional football states of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia require continuing support to maintain and build their strength at grassroots level. The long-term significance of New South Wales and Queensland, however, is also obvious.

They represent more than half of Australia's population with growth rates which exceed the national average. Within the next 10 to 15 years, it is estimated that four million people will be living within 100 kilometres of the Brisbane GPO and Queensland will replace Victoria as Australia's second most populous state.

Among the football codes, Australian Football has historically been behind rugby league, rugby union and soccer in NSW and Queensland, but considerable progress has been made in NSW and the Australian Capital Territory since the recommendations of the NSW-ACT Task Force were adopted in 1998.

The AFL Commission is confident similar progress can be made in Queensland but recognises the size of the challenge in bringing about generational change in broad community support for, and participation in, Australian Football.

Members of the AFL Queensland Commission are:

- Darryl Bray (*Chairman*)
- Dr Susan Dann
- Graeme Downie
- Andrew Ireland
- Reg Lillywhite
- Michael McCormick
- Dr Ross Smith



AFL
RECORD
The Official Program of the Australian Football League

FREE INSIDE: AFL Players Giant Poster

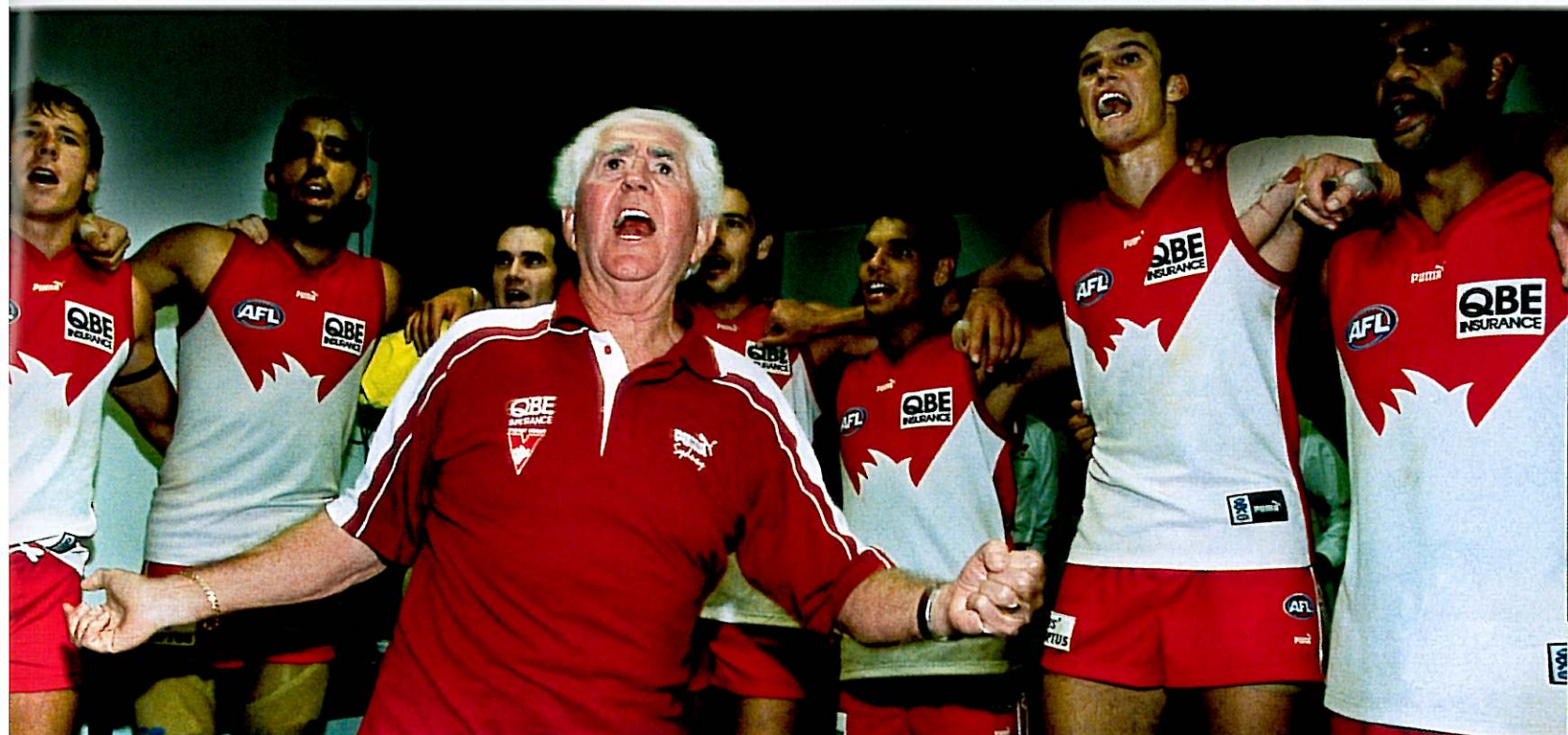
MCG, Saturday September 2, 2000
\$7.50 inc GST

Grand Final 2000

AFL
GRAND FINAL 2000
ESSENDON v MELBOURNE

NATIONAL EDITION
ISSN 0 85030 9 1
7 00958 52869 5

4



COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

FACES OF FOOTY: The AFL produced a giant poster (left) including every player who played senior football in the 2000 season. Fanatical supporter Kenny Williams (above) leads the club song after a big win for the Sydney Swans.

A U S T R A L I A N F O O T B A L L L E A G U E





GENERAL MANAGER — COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS: Ben Buckley

Restructure aims to provide resources to grow and manage new revenue streams for the AFL

Commercial Operations is principally responsible for promoting and managing the AFL brand while driving AFL revenues. The division's focus throughout season 2000 was on providing greater value and service to all elements of the AFL, both internally, across all AFL departments, and to the AFL's corporate partners.

In a business sense, the AFL is a wide-ranging organisation and AFL Commercial Operations covers all components of commercial strategies, including the following:

Sponsorships through corporate partners

Sponsorships continue to be a significant component of the AFL's gross revenues. During the year 2000, much work was done to develop new sponsorship opportunities and partnerships, including revaluing some existing relationships. The AFL was prepared to take the long view, to ensure that the true value of relationships to its brand was recognised. The department's restructure included new appointments to oversee the management of existing relationships, with the aim of providing new business opportunities for sponsors and partners.

The licensing of consumer products

Products licensed by the AFL and branded AFL continue to be sought after by consumers, consequently the AFL is consistently approached for new licences for a vast array of consumer products.

Corporate hospitality, events and entertainment

Organisation and management of hospitality at AFL matches, events conducted under the auspices of the AFL including the Australian Football Hall of Fame, the Brownlow Medal and pre-game entertainment.

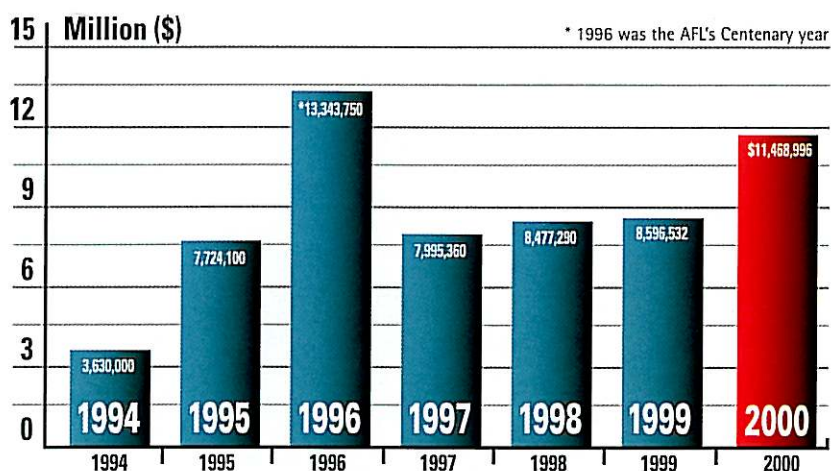
Management and relationships with AFL Members

On top of the management of AFL membership, this role includes liaison with clubs to develop concepts and centrally organised programs for growing club membership. This is a vital role, ensuring AFL membership – either with the AFL or with AFL clubs – is one of the most sought after in sport.

Commercial media and publications

Includes developing opportunities for new business through AFL Films and AFL Publications, and continuing to develop the *AFL Record* as Australia's leading sports program and magazine. AFL Films is licensed to archive and manage all vision from AFL games.

AFL Sponsorship Revenue 1994-2000





*'WHILE IT IS
ESSENTIAL THAT THE
AFL CREATES ROBUST
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
ITS CORPORATE
PARTNERS, IT IS
VITALLY IMPORTANT
THAT THE GAME IS
MARKETED AND
PITCHED TO ALL
SUPPORTERS OF
THE GAME'*

A BIG GAME: The AFL recognises that the game, the culture that surrounds it, and the connection supporters have to clubs is its most valuable commodity in the long term.

Ticketing

The AFL makes every endeavor to maintain the price of tickets to AFL matches at affordable levels. Commercial Operations is responsible for procuring new revenue streams from sources beyond the ticket office, to ensure that the cost of going to AFL matches remains one of the most affordable tickets in world sport.

Brand management, including advertising, marketing and promotion of the AFL game

The AFL's brand management role extends from the positioning, presentation and management of the AFL brand as the leader in Australian sport, through to marketing and advertising the AFL game at all levels – from game development through to the AFL competition.

New media/e-commerce

A wide-reaching strategic plan aimed at developing e-commerce and new media opportunities for both the AFL and the AFL clubs was presented to the AFL Commission and the AFL clubs during 2000, was accepted and will be implemented through 2001. This process will ensure that all clubs will gain maximum benefits from new media – in both financial terms and in their capacity to communicate with their supporters.

While it is essential that the AFL has robust relationships with its corporate partners, it is vitally important that the game is promoted and available to all supporters of the game. This is a fundamental tenet of the AFL's Mission Statement.

The development of significant sponsorships and corporate relationships and maximising the broadcast and new media rights are all part of the process which keeps the cost of attending AFL matches at internationally low levels. The Commercial Operations Department evolved in 2000 from a single focused marketing division to the department responsible for all AFL revenue drivers and brand management.

Commercial Operations is continually looking at ways of developing business opportunities and relationships for the AFL. Areas of expansion that now come under the department's operations include publishing (*AFL Record* and all AFL publications) and commercial media. The sale and servicing of broadcast rights outside Australia, as well AFL Films, are both important components of commercial media.

AFL Films was a newly created entity in 2000 that had access to the film and television libraries of the AFL and the Seven Network. Publications are an untapped market for the AFL and have tremendous potential to grow.

The current internet arrangement between the Seven Network and News Limited is due to expire in 2001 and negotiations concerning future AFL presence on the internet are being handled by Commercial Operations.



Business Units within Commercial Operations

Business development

A new business development unit, headed by Andrew McKenzie, has been introduced for 2001.

This unit will concentrate on new business opportunities and the integration of commercial initiatives across all areas of Commercial Operations. McKenzie has been the AFL's Licensing and Consumer Products Manager for the past six years.

Corporate partners

The AFL's corporate partners play an integral part in funding the AFL competition and many of the community-based AFL development programs. The AFL is an attractive sport for organisations to become involved in due to its high attendances, massive TV exposure, successful community participation programs and the passion that many Australians feel for our clubs and players.

The focus of the 2000 AFL season for the Corporate Partners Department was to continue to build the profile of the various activities/programs created in conjunction with our corporate partners. As many relationships were up for renewal, it was also a hectic period for negotiating partnerships for the 2001 AFL season and beyond.

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola has been the AFL's naming rights partner since 1995. In that time, Coca-Cola has sponsored the Coca-Cola AFL premiership season, the Coca-Cola AFL finals series, the Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final and the Coca-Cola International Rules Series.

Highlights of Coca-Cola's involvement with the AFL included the Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final Parade, which saw over 100,000 crowd the streets of Melbourne to applaud the competing Grand Final clubs – Essendon and Melbourne. There was also the Caught Red Handed Competition which gave supporters the opportunity to sit on the boundary line with "Dipper" at Friday night football and win great prizes.

Carlton & United Breweries

CUB continued its long-standing relationship with the AFL and many of its member clubs during the 2000 season.

A highlight of the sponsorship was CUB's continuing sponsorship of the AFL's international highlights program, *Fosters' Aussie Rules*, which is broadcast extensively throughout the United States, Europe, New Zealand and many South American, Middle-East and Pacific Island countries.

Ansett Australia

As the AFL's official airline, Ansett Australia has flown the AFL clubs throughout Australia for matches since 1989.

The Ansett Cup was again a highlight of the AFL year, with Essendon getting its season off to a flying start with an emphatic victory in the Ansett Cup grand final in March. The round-robin format was a great success and the Ansett Cup also took football to developing AFL areas including Cairns, Darwin, Hobart, Canberra and Wellington in New Zealand.

McDonald's

McDonald's continued its involvement with the AFL as the official match ball sponsor and AFL Auskick partner in season 2000. The AFL Auskick program continued to give opportunities for primary school-aged children to actively participate in AFL football in a safe and fun environment. The success of the program was reflected in the strong growth in the program and the AFL is appreciative of McDonald's strong support of AFL Auskick.

Norwich Union

The Norwich Union AFL Rising Star Award continues to develop into one of the most sought after awards in the AFL calendar. Awarded to the best young player in the competition, as judged by the All-Australian selectors, past winners have included Nathan Buckley, Nick Holland, Ben Cousins and Adam Goodes. In 2000, the winner of the \$20,000 Norwich Union investment portfolio was Paul Hasleby, who narrowly defeated Essendon's Adam Ramanauskas. Paul excelled in the midfield in his first season for the Fremantle Dockers.

Seven Network

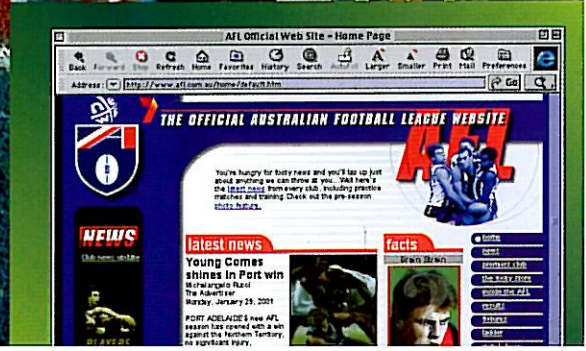
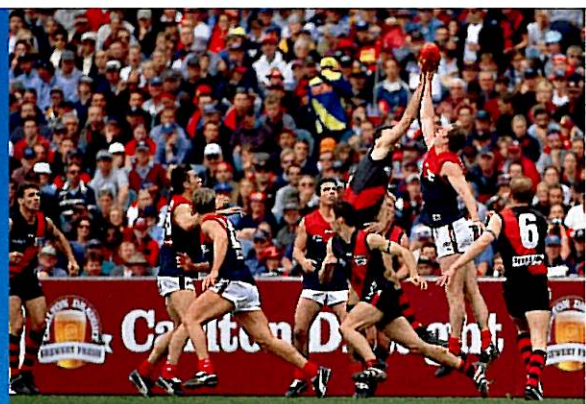
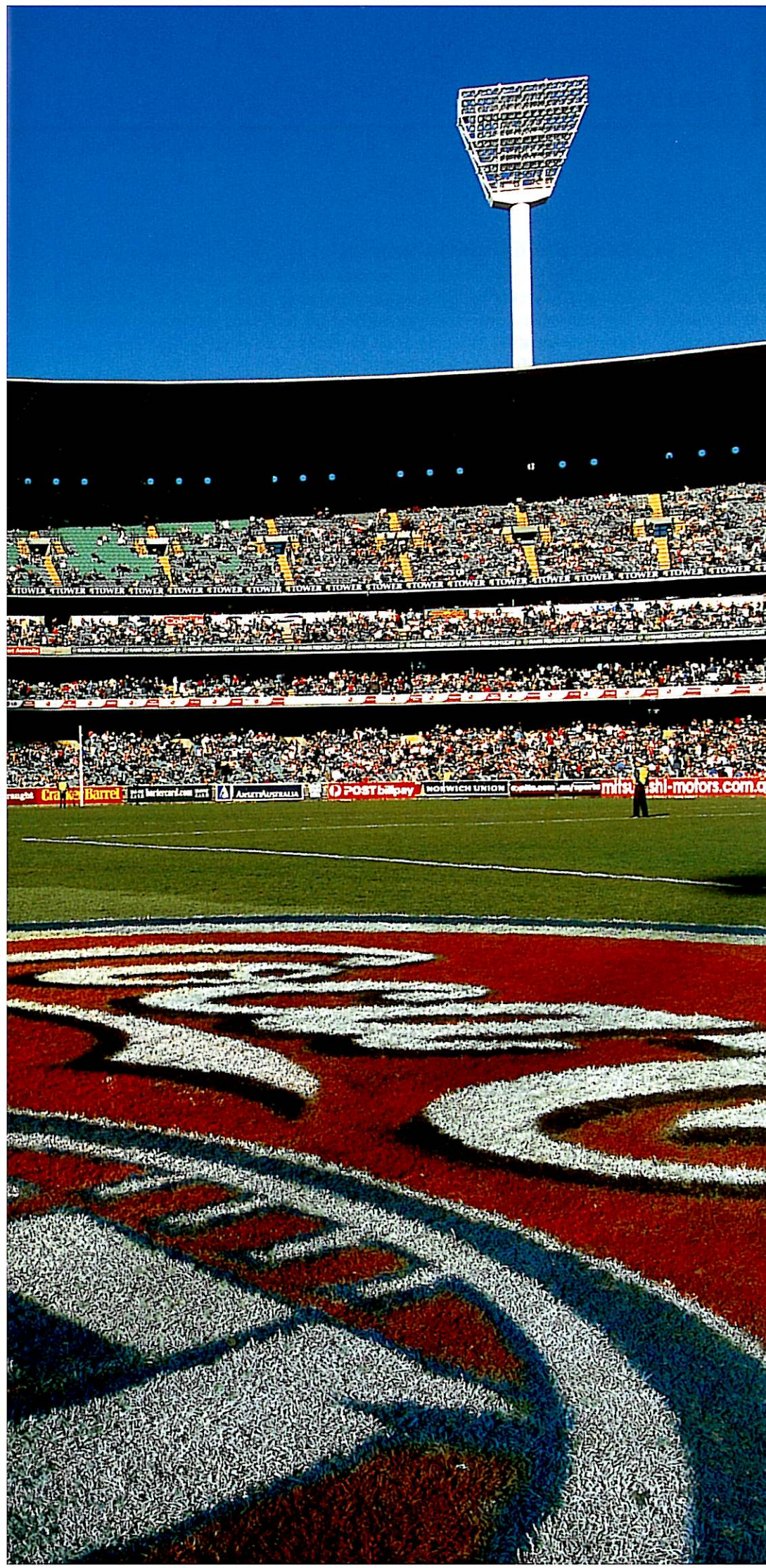
The Seven Network was again the AFL's host broadcaster on free-to-air and pay-TV during the 2000 season. It broadcast more than 400 hours of live AFL football nationally and the average supporter tuned into more than 30 telecasts.

News Limited

News Limited has been a corporate partner since 1998 and has an agreement to promote the AFL through its metropolitan daily newspapers throughout Australia. Together with Channel 7, News Limited also launched the official AFL website afl.com.au, which has grown to become the No. 1 sports website in the country.

CORPORATE PARTNERS: In 2000 the AFL continued a range of mutually beneficial relationships with a variety of corporate entities.





Consumer Products

The AFL continues to be Australia's pre-eminent consumer brand in sports licensed product. Retail sales in 2000 averaged in excess of \$2 million every week of the year and reached almost \$120 million for the year. These sales were achieved across eight product categories including replica and supporter apparel, memorabilia, sports equipment, entertainment, stationary, giftware, homewares and food. AFL Stores have become a key distribution channel for AFL consumer products as well as a strong brand statement in the retail marketplace. Several new AFL Stores opened in 2000 bringing the total number of stores nationally to 17.

Essendon's on-field success during the 2000 season and premiership victory generated record sales in premiership apparel, videos, memorabilia and giftware in particular.

Promotional support from the AFL consumer products division was strong once again in 2000. The promotional program included the successful 'One Day in December' television campaign which was aired nationally during December, weekly double-page advertisements in the *AFL Record* and in-store AFL player appearances. There were also numerous consumer promotions with key retailers and themed promotions based around key events such as the Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final and the International Rules Series played in Ireland in October.

Strong foundations were laid during 2000 for further sustained growth in the AFL's consumer products business beyond 2000. Significant long-term partnerships have been formed with brand leaders in key categories. These partnerships will be important in driving a consumer products business which actively contributes to broader AFL goals of increasing participation in grassroots football nationally and promoting public interest in the game by building the strongest consumer brand position in Australian sport.

Events and Entertainment

As identified in the AFL Mission Statement and Guiding Principles, Australian Football is very much in the entertainment industry. Quality presentation and first-class entertainment at AFL major events are trademark qualities for which the AFL has gained a justified reputation as the leader in its field.

In creating and delivering quality events and entertainment with a fresh and innovative edge, the AFL is always mindful of recognising its origins and preserving the history and traditions upon which the game is built.

Key events and functions organised and/or co-ordinated by the events department included the Coca-Cola AFL finals series and Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final, the Ansett Cup, the Brownlow Medal dinner and vote count, the Premiership Season dinner and induction of Life Members, the Australian Football Hall of Fame induction dinner, the All-Australian team announcement, the 200 Club annual dinner, the Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final parade, the Grand Final pre-game ceremony, the International Rules Series in Ireland and the annual London exhibition match.

Advertising and Marketing

The AFL launched the 2000 season with a new fan-based communication, a departure from the 'I'd Like To See That' campaign which had served it well for a number of years.

The brand campaign aimed to provide match information as often as possible throughout the season, with the aim of driving attendances.

Passionate AFL fans had the opportunity to communicate their love for the game, their club and their playing idols. Some of those fans were celebrities in their own right – people such as Victorian Premier Steve Bracks (Geelong), ALP federal deputy leader Simon Crean (Kangaroos), Australian



*'RETAIL SALES IN 2000
AVERAGED IN EXCESS
OF \$2 MILLION EVERY
WEEK OF THE YEAR
AND REACHED
ALMOST \$120 MILLION
FOR THE YEAR'*



cricketer Ricky Ponting (Kangaroos), Senator Natasha Stott-Despoja (Port Adelaide), Peter Brock (Collingwood) and Ernie Dingo (West Coast Eagles). All enthusiastically appeared in television commercials, promoting their club and the great AFL game.

The AFL, in conjunction with AFL Films, undertook the ambitious task of producing around 70 television commercials throughout season 2000, with an accompanying number of radio applications. We also featured an Anzac Day campaign, finals series and *AFL Grand Final Record* campaigns.

Late in the 2000 season, the AFL invited nominated advertising agencies to "tender" for the AFL advertising account. Presentations took place in December, with an appointment to be announced prior to the 2001 season.

In season 2000, the AFL's pre-season competition, the Ansett Cup, saw a joint national Ansett-AFL advertising campaign launched, with significant further advertising and promotion supporting matches at non-traditional venues of Darwin, Cairns, Hobart, Canberra and Wellington, New Zealand. These regional venues relish the opportunity to welcome AFL matches into their community and keenly support the AFL's promotional efforts.

Extensive research of AFL supporters was conducted by Quantum Market Research during the 2000 season. The completed report will be presented to the AFL prior to the commencement of the 2001 season and will form a vital point of reference for the Integrated Communications Strategy, which was being formulated throughout 2000 in readiness for the 2001 season.

AFL Membership

AFL membership was again at capacity with total membership exceeding 52,000. There were several significant changes to membership benefits in season 2000. With the closure of Waverley Park and the introduction of Colonial Stadium, members were provided with prime seating areas and first class facilities from many different vantage points.

Reserved seating was also introduced at both the MCG and Colonial Stadium. There were some teething problems but members soon became accustomed to reserving a seat for big games at the MCG and at Colonial Stadium.

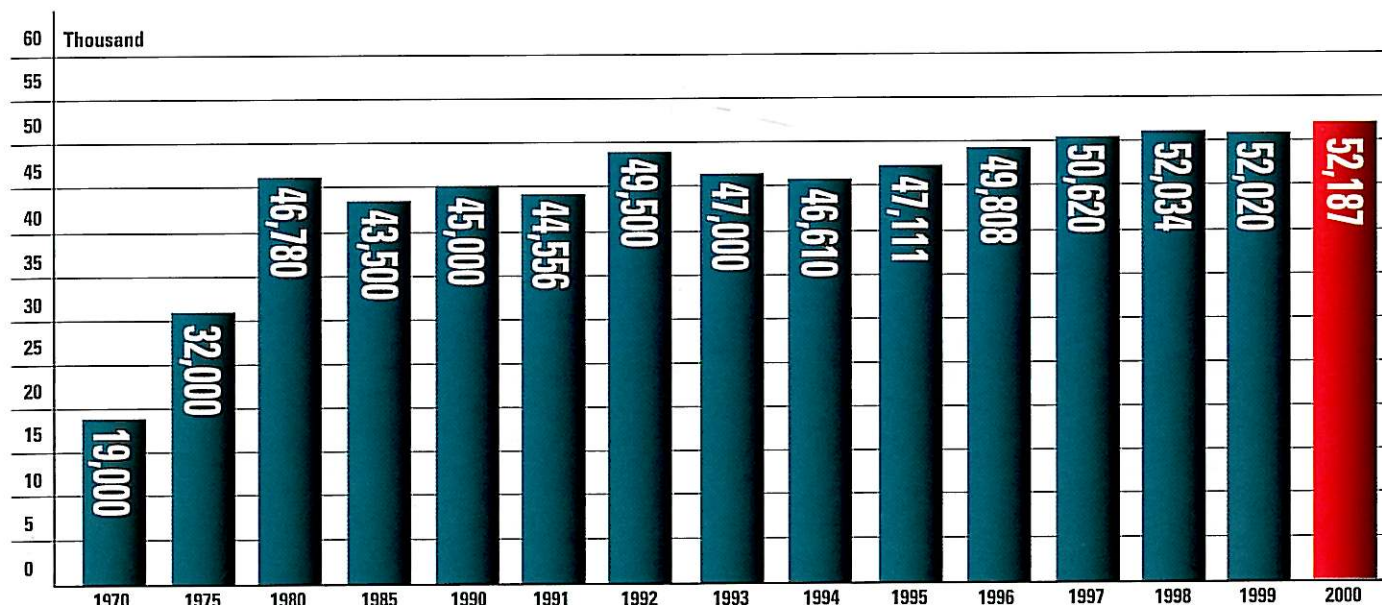
Season 2000 entitlements allowed both Full and Restricted members to access up to 30 home and away matches of their choice at either the MCG, Colonial Stadium and Optus Oval, entry into all Ansett Cup matches (including the Ansett Cup grand final), and access to the first two rounds of the Coca-Cola AFL finals series.

Restricted members were able to access all finals played in Victoria in the first two weeks. Full Member entitlements extended to the preliminary final and Grand Final.

Once again, AFL members were able to access international cricket at the MCG during the summer months.

The Tom Wills Coterie has amalgamated with the newly created AFL Premiership Club. There were 87 Tom Wills members in season 2000 and the AFL was yet again delighted with the efforts of the Tom Wills Committee, with special thanks to Lisa and Max Kirwan.

AFL Membership 1970-2000





AFL Membership 2000 Club Support Table

Club	Adults	Concession	Juniors	Total	% of Total Club Support
Adelaide	441	65	77	583	1.5
Brisbane Lions	530	69	90	689	1.8
Carlton	4,255	615	642	5,512	14.2
Collingwood	5,709	746	853	7,308	18.9
Essendon	5,315	818	1,127	7,260	18.7
Fremantle	24	1	1	26	0.7
Geelong	2,355	304	378	3,037	7.8
Hawthorn	1,658	283	245	2,186	5.6
Kangaroos	1,661	184	224	2,069	5.3
Melbourne	1,406	246	310	1,962	5.1
Port Adelaide	84	7	8	99	0.3
Richmond	2,711	290	375	3,376	8.7
St Kilda	1,932	271	350	2,553	6.6
Sydney	540	83	62	685	1.8
West Coast Eagles	110	14	22	146	0.4
Western Bulldogs	963	132	138	1,233	3.2
TOTALS	29,694	4,128	4,902	38,724	

These figures show the figures for the Club Support Package for each club.
Total reimbursement from the Club Support Package in 2000 was \$3.02 million.

AFL Memberships 2000

AFL Full (Male & Female)	25,256
AFL Full (junior)	1,779
AFL Full Country (male & female)	4,317
AFL Full Country (junior)	243
AFL Restricted (Male & Female)	11,436
AFL Restricted (junior)	3,442
Absentee Members	5,714
TOTAL	52,187

2000 AFL Membership Figures

Packages	% of Total	
CLUB SUPPORT PACKAGE		
Full Members	25,093	48.2
Restricted Members	13,631	26.1
COMPETITION PACKAGE		
Full Members	6,324	12.1
Restricted Members	1,247	2.3
ABSENTEE		
Full Members	4,102	7.9
Restricted Members	1,612	3.1
AFL Centenary Club	178	0.34
TOTAL	52,187	

2000 AFL Club Membership (by city)

Melbourne	246,418	Sydney	30,177
Adelaide	77,821	Brisbane	20,295
Perth	63,793	TOTAL	438,504

AFL Club Membership 2000

Rankings	Club	Adults	Concession	Juniors	Total Members at 6/5/00	Total Members at 15/6/1999	% Variance
1	Adelaide	38,073	2,932	1,891	42,896	42,120	1.84%
2	West Coast Eagles	31,788	4,046	3,034	38,868	36,212	7.33%
3	Port Adelaide	30,640	2,029	2,256	34,925	37,166	-6.03%
4	Essendon	24,380	3,841	6,057	34,278	29,858	14.80%
5	Sydney	22,210	2,973	4,994	30,177	31,175	-3.20%
6	Collingwood	20,264	3,257	5,411	28,932	32,358	-10.59%
7	Carlton	18,746	3,014	5,811	27,571	25,719	7.20%
8	Hawthorn	18,457	3,290	5,132	26,879	32,120	-16.32%
9	Richmond	19,183	2,304	5,382	26,869	29,047	-7.50%
10	Geelong	18,217	3,184	4,194	25,595	21,032	21.70%
11	Fremantle	16,969	1,751	6,205	24,925	24,896	0.12%
12	Kangaroos	16,748	2,228	3,180	22,156	22,080	0.34%
13	Brisbane Lions	16,600	1,788	1,907	20,295	16,931	19.87%
14	Melbourne	12,620	2,025	3,582	18,227	19,713	-7.54%
15	Western Bulldogs	12,367	2,038	3,651	18,056	20,491	-11.88%
16	St Kilda	12,700	1,595	3,560	17,855	20,793	-14.13%
TOTALS		329,962	42,295	66,247	438,504	441,711	-0.73%

The AFL's premier corporate package was created for season 2000, with the launch of the Premiership Club. Each package was sold for \$4000 per seat and entitled the bearer to a guaranteed prime reserved seat to every AFL home and away game played at both the MCG and Colonial Stadium (including the Coca-Cola AFL Grand Final), with exclusive dining rooms and entertainment areas. Premiership Club members also had access to all AFL major functions, including the Brownlow Medal presentation dinner, and were able to attend several functions exclusively for club members. The club sold just over 100 membership in its inaugural year and is looking to build this membership base to 250 for season 2001.

AFL Publishing

The *AFL Record*, in its 89th year of continuous publication (1912-2000) remained Australia's leading sports program/magazine, with sales of more than two million copies in the 26 weeks of the season. *The AFL Grand Final Record* was sold nationally with more than 70,000 copies sold in Grand Final week in newsstands, and more than 50,000 copies sold at the MCG.

AFL Publishing produced more than 50 separate titles during the year – from posters and fliers through to magazines, corporate documents and this *Annual Report*. One of the biggest productions of the year is the annual historical and statistical guide, *AFL 2000*, which contained more than 630 pages in 2000 and was again offered at a discount rate to AFL members. *AFL 2001* is bigger still, with more than 750 pages. AFL members also received four special publications during the year as part of their annual membership.

The *AFL Record* maintained its cover price at \$2.50 until round 17 when the Federal Government's GST was introduced, pushing the cover price to \$2.70 (inc. GST). While printing and publishing costs have increased significantly in recent years, the *AFL Record* has been kept at a relatively cheap cover price compared to programs and magazines produced by other major Australian sports. Advertising in the *AFL Record* was managed by Cameron Media Sales and photographs were provided by Allsport.

Internet

The official AFL website www.afl.com.au maintained its position as the top-ranked sports website in Australia in 2000, recording peaks of 441,000 unique visitors (July) and 20 million page impressions (August).

afl.com.au was launched in 1998 as a partnership between the AFL, News Limited and the Seven Network. The four-year joint venture agreement expires at the end of 2001.

Former Melbourne Football Club chief executive Cameron Schwab was appointed chief executive of the joint-venture in June 2000.



FACE OF FOOTBALL:

As the game grows, more imaginative ways to promote the stars of the game are being developed by the AFL.

The site launched several new features for the 2000 season, including live audio streaming, streaming video, a Fantasy Football competition and live chat with players.

Live audio of every AFL match was available on the site, courtesy of 3AW and affiliated stations and the Seven Network.

High-quality downloadable video highlights of every match were posted on the site every Monday, and in a first, streaming video of the Grand Final was made available on demand within minutes of the final siren.

The fact there were more than 25,000 entrants in Fantasy Football, together with 65,000 who joined the site's successful tipping competition, highlighted the popularity of interactive features among football fans.

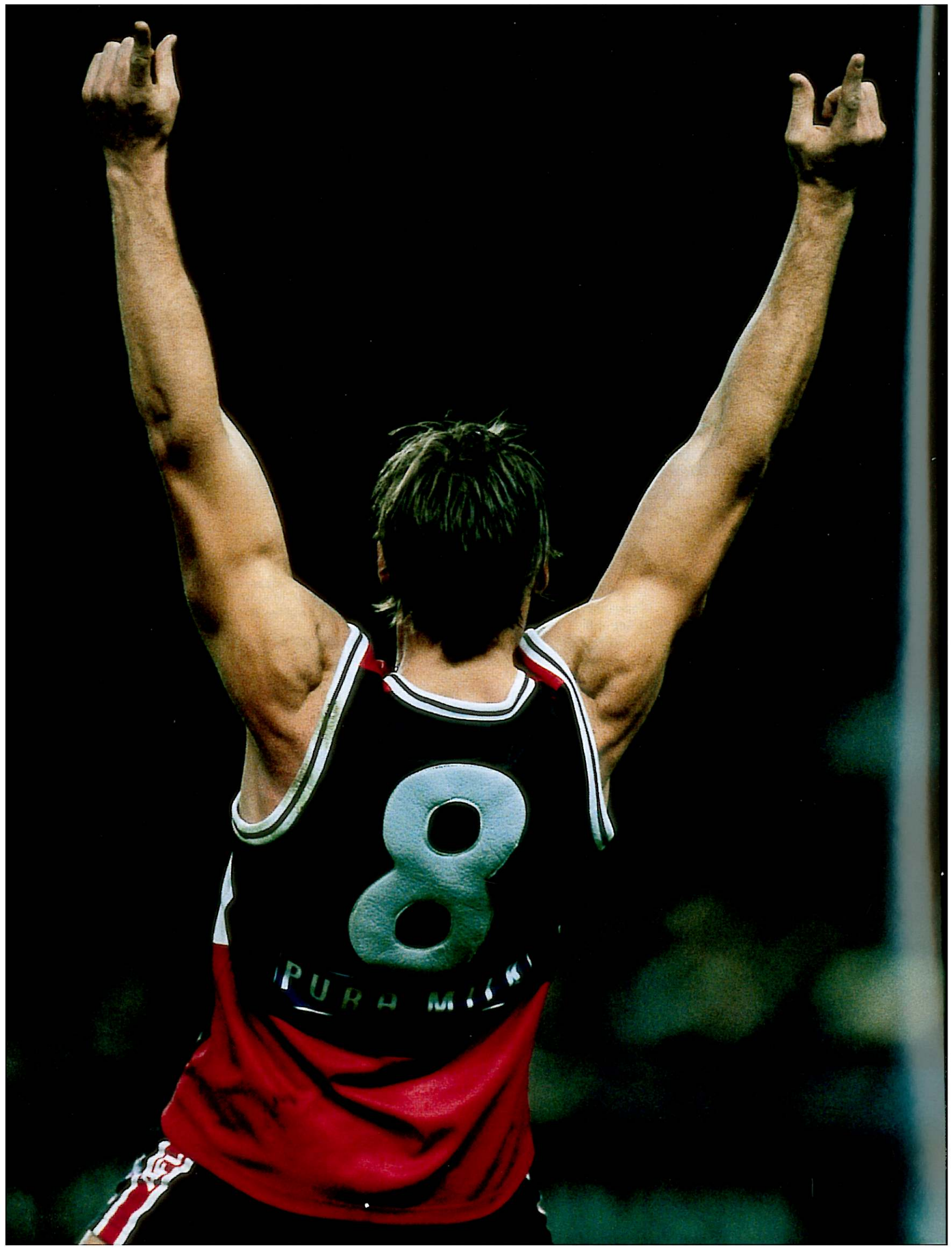
Twice-weekly live chat sessions with high-profile AFL players were made possible with the co-operation of the AFL Players' Association.

AFL chief executive officer Wayne Jackson also participated twice in live chat during the season to answer questions from football fans from around Australia and overseas.

A multimedia sub-site, featuring AFL stars Wayne Carey and Matthew Lloyd, was developed with funding from Nike. The site supported an offline advertising campaign built around the two players.

Other new sponsors attracted to the site's high traffic and loyal community in 2000 included ANZ, Telstra, Carlton and United Breweries, Fountain and hotjobs.com.au

Direct access to the AFL's strategic policies and sub-sites relating to various AFL programs including AFL Auskick, AFL 'Information Sheets', AFL Membership, the *AFL Record* and the *Just AFL* television program were all created to provide more information to visitors to the site.



5

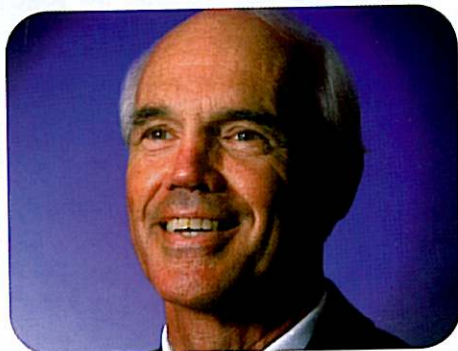


GAME DEVELOPMENT

EXCITEMENT AHEAD: St Kilda's Max Hudghton (*left*) played junior football in both Victoria and Queensland before being drafted by the Saints. The first time many of the next generation of AFL stars will touch a football will be during an AFL Auskick session (*above*).

A U S T R A L I A N F O O T B A L L L E A G U E





GENERAL MANAGER — GAME DEVELOPMENT: Ross Smith

Strategy set to encourage participation at all levels of the AFL game

The AFL Game Development Department has met several key strategic and structural challenges in 2000 aimed at setting the foundations for improved outcomes across all areas of AFL Game Development.

The AFL national development plan, which sets the strategic direction until 2004, will be developed for presentation to the AFL Commission in late 2001.

It is the AFL's role to co-ordinate, in close partnership with the state and territory football organisations, the promotion and development of the game nationally. There are five key program areas in Game Development each with a national manager responsible to the general manager.

These areas are:

- Administration of the game both on a national and international basis.
- Participation in the AFL game at all levels in the community.
- Talent identification and recruitment of potential AFL players
- Talent development through the AIS/AFL Academy
- Training of coaches, umpires, trainers and club personnel to ensure that the game is played in a high quality environment.

This structure, with its links to a similar one at the states/territories level, provides the department with the opportunity to focus clearly on the core objectives of the national development plan.

Participation

Participation in the AFL game has increased since the first national development plan was developed in 1989. In 2000, 391,782 participants were involved in the AFL game across AFL Auskick, school football and reduced number programs, club football, veterans and women's football. In the 1999 AFL Annual Report, total numbers for season 1999 were reported as 447,579, but further analysis of the reporting process has uncovered some anomalies in counting.

In the 2000 national census, there was a more rigorous scrutiny of double counting of participants. There was also a reclassification of AFL promotional activities such as clinics and nine-a-side football, recognising these activities as being separate to more traditional football activities at club level. Where such activities were conducted over a period of fewer than six weeks, they were classified as promotional activities and not included in the overall number of participants.



WARMING UP: Auskick children definitely aren't sitting on the fence when it comes to their love of Australian Football.

'IT IS THE AFL'S ROLE TO CO-ORDINATE, IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE AND TERRITORY FOOTBALL ORGANISATIONS, THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAME NATIONALLY'

All promotional activities are included in the census and will provide, over time, an important indicator of effectiveness to increase ongoing participation in the AFL game.

Programs promoting participation have been developed in:

- AFL Auskick – community, primary school and clubs
- Schools – secondary level
- Clubs, and
- Indigenous communities and schools

The successful AFL Auskick program has increased dramatically the numbers of people involved, from an early age, in the AFL game. Its adaptability to each market, reliance on community involvement and emphasis on fun makes it an attractive program for players and parents. In 2000, 80,074 boys and girls registered for participation in the AFL Auskick program.

McDonald's ended its association with the AFL as a supporter of this program in 2000. During McDonald's five-year sponsorship term, registration in AFL Auskick grew from 53,000 to 80,000 and the AFL would like to express its appreciation to McDonald's for assisting with the growth of the program.

During the 10-year period from 1990 to 2000, in which there has been a major focus on the growth of participation at the primary school age level, there has been an average annual increase of 6.7 per cent. The number of participants in all forms of the AFL game at this level – school, club and Auskick – has increased from 138,086 to 230,499.

The success of AFL Auskick in attracting participants is unquestioned. However, the transition of these people to junior club football and beyond is a major participation issue for AFL's game development department.

The first step in addressing the issues of retention in the AFL game is to identify the reasons why people leave the game at various stages. Game Development is in the process

Funding Game Development (\$)

Total AFL game development expenditure in 2000 was:

New South Wales/ACT (including NSW/ACT Rams)	5,240,000
Northern Territory and north-west Western Australia	472,000
Queensland	1,573,000
South Australia	405,000
Tasmania (including State League & Tassie Mariners)	1,249,000
Victoria (including TAC Cup Under-18 competition)	4,352,000
Western Australia	806,000
New Zealand	120,000
International other	251,000
AFL administration & costs	687,000
TOTAL	15,156,000

Transfer fee payments to states and territories in 2000* were: (\$)

Western Australia	882,530
South Australia	801,030
Tasmania	182,750
North Territory	96,320
Queensland	124,850
NSW/ACT	167,700
Victoria	2,203,400
TOTAL	4,458,680

***The following payments are made by AFL clubs via the state body:**

- \$14,500 when the player is drafted by an AFL club;
- \$14,500 when the player makes his AFL debut;
- \$11,500 when the player plays his 10th AFL game;
- \$11,500 at the start of the player's second year;

Maximum total transfer fees per player: \$52,000

of discovering those reasons. Research was completed in Victoria and NSW in 2000 in order to identify the impediments to players continuing to play football beyond AFL Auskick. This study needs to be further analysed, but it is certain that AFL Auskick centres linked to local junior football clubs had higher retention rates.

Indigenous Communities

The participation of indigenous communities in the AFL game continues to increase. The AFL Rio Tinto KickStart program, implemented in 1997, has established a successful formula for introducing the AFL game to remote communities. The AFL Rio Tinto KickStart program emphasises positive role models and links participation with healthy lifestyle messages. Local communities recognise the program as an excellent opportunity to promote health

messages to young people and establish relationships between regions. The program also offers opportunities for talented players from remote communities to pursue potential AFL careers.

At ground level, the program is conducted by four full-time regional development officers – Gilbert McAdam, and Eric Wade in the north-western region of Australia (Kimberley and Pilbara), Mark Motlop in Darwin (Northern Territory) and Keith Sambo in Cairns (far north Queensland).

The AFL Rio Tinto KickStart program also ran a series of football competitions that culminated in the Just Jeans Cup. Involved were two teams from the Kimberleys and one each from the Northern Territory and the Tiwi Islands.

In addition to the financial contribution from the AFL and Rio Tinto, the governments of Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission Regional Councils and the Indigenous Sports Program from the Australian Sports Commission have all contributed to the on-going program development and implementation.

AFL Queensland review

The review of the AFL game in Queensland was undertaken by a specially appointed review committee, headed by John Brown, and it tabled its report in February 2000. The review, following a similar process in NSW in 1998, was conducted to identify strategies and structures to grow the game from grassroots community club level to the state league level.

Key findings of the review, supported by the AFL Commission and being implemented are:

- Establishment of an independent state governing body for AFL – AFL Queensland – to be guided by a seven-person commission, appointed by the AFL.
- Formation of a new eight-team state league with clubs participating under licence from AFL Queensland.
- Formation of an expanded south-east Queensland competition to support the state league.
- Support for all regional bodies and, in particular, special support for remote communities in the Cape York region.
- Introduction of a state development plan and appointment of appropriate staff to achieve a significant increase in participation for both primary and secondary school aged children over the next three to five years.



PULL THE BOOTS ON: The AFL ensures that all young players are able to play the game of AFL football in a positive environment.



DARREN MCNAMARA - ALLSPORT