



108th annual report 2004

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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National Sport Information Centre
Australian Sport Commission
Leverrier Cres.
Bruce ACT 2617
Australia

18 JUL 2006

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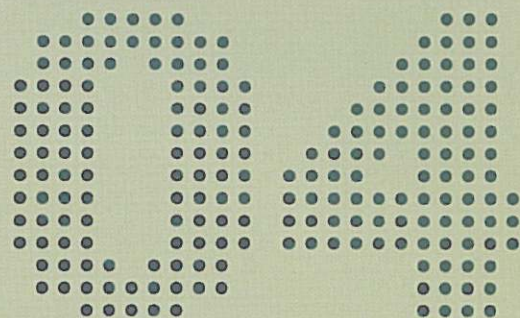
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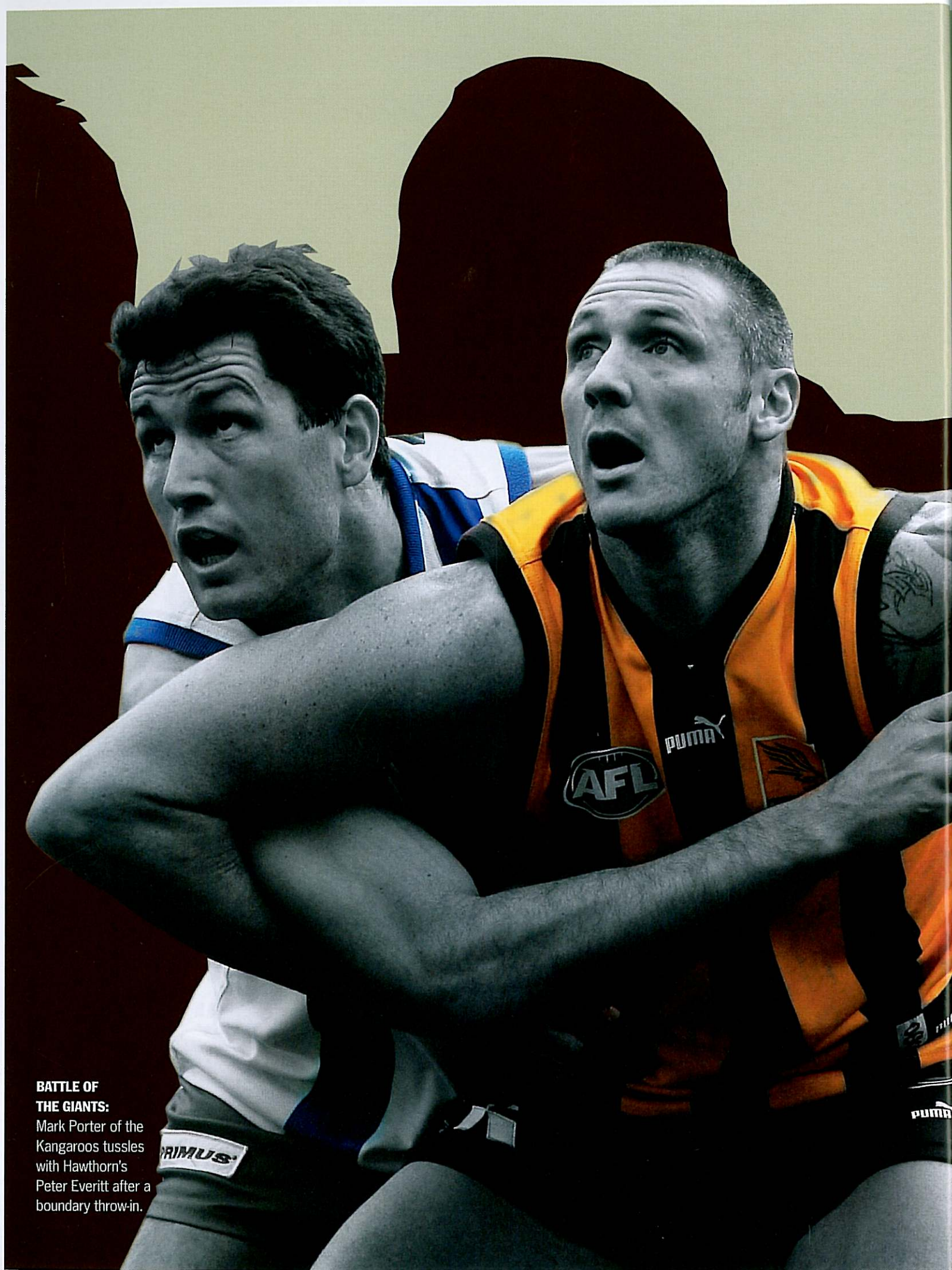


108th annual report 2004



YEAR TO REMEMBER:
SOME OF THE MEMORABLE IMAGES FROM
THE 2004 TOYOTA AFL PREMIERSHIP SEASON.

FRONT COVER:
PLAYERS CELEBRATE PORT ADELAIDE'S
FIRST AFL PREMIERSHIP.




**BATTLE OF
THE GIANTS:**
Mark Porter of the
Kangaroos tussles
with Hawthorn's
Peter Everitt after a
boundary throw-in.



Strategic Imperatives & Executive Reports

SECTION 1



The AFL has again carried out its duties as custodian of our only Indigenous football code, Australian Football, with diligence. Driven by a new management structure, the AFL's list of four objectives – to grow the game by appropriate policies; to recruit, retain and develop participants; to connect with fans and community; and to manage responsibly and strive for financial growth and stability – were all delivered upon strongly. The measurable outcomes of those objectives and initiatives are summarised on the following pages, and in detail throughout this report.



2004 Objectives and Outcomes

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES 2004

Objective // To grow the game via appropriate policies

Major initiatives

- Aim to schedule Toyota AFL Premiership Season games in all states and territories.
- Develop facility strategy in partnership with AFL clubs and various levels of government.
- Undertake review of key policies relating to:
 - Judicial system.
 - Drug code.
 - Location allowances.
 - Sexual harassment, discrimination and assault.

Measurable outcomes

- National outcome achieved with first ever premiership season game in Darwin, between Western Bulldogs and Port Adelaide. Games continue to be scheduled in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.
- Construction of \$28 million re-development of Skilled Stadium starts after funding support secured from the Victorian Government, City of Greater Geelong and Federal Government to provide upgraded facilities for spectators, visiting clubs and the media and other multi-use facilities for the community. The AFL is also contributing to the project.
- The Tasmanian Government commits to further \$8 million development of Aurora Stadium, Launceston, including an additional 1800 seats and further covered seating for spectators, media and coaches' facilities, installation of a video scoreboard and provision of office facilities for AFL Tasmania. The AFL is contributing to the project.
- The ACT Government allocates \$1.2 million for a further upgrade of Manuka Oval including additional covered seating for spectators.
- The Western Bulldogs, with support of the AFL, secure funding of \$19.5 million for the re-development of Whitten Oval. The Prime Minister, Mr John Howard, announces a contribution of \$8 million from the Federal Government. The Victorian Government will contribute \$3 million, local councils \$2 million and the Forever Foundation \$3 million to the project which will include a sports, medical and allied health care centre, child care centre, conference and convention centre, upgraded administration and training facilities and improved road, rail and pedestrian access.

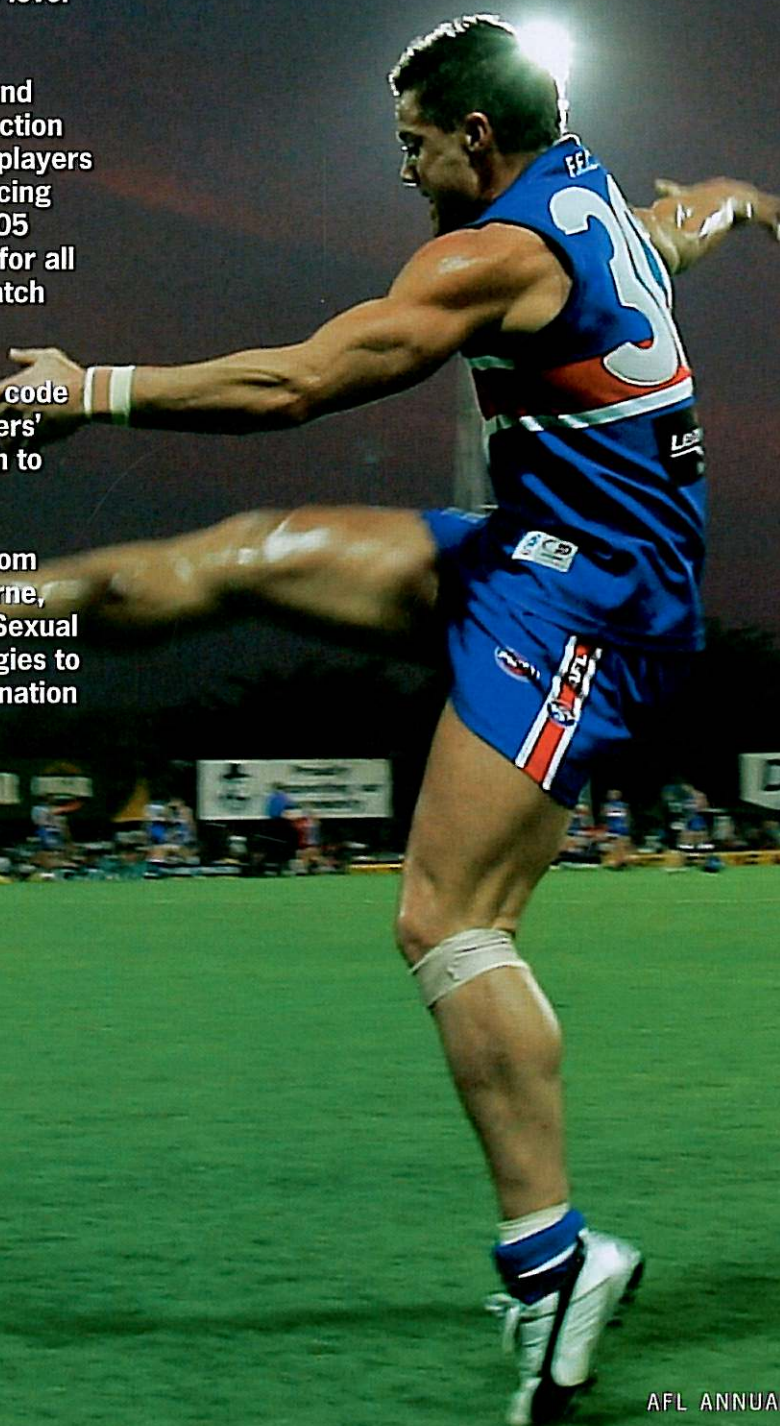
ON TARGET:

Western Bulldog Matthew Robbins completes his pre-game warm-up for the first match to be played in Darwin for premiership points. Port Adelaide won by 86 points.



Toyota AFL Premiership Season matches were played in all eight states and territories in 2004

- The AFL Commission resolved that the location allowance for the Brisbane Lions and Sydney Swans would cease at the end of the 2006 season and that a cost of living allowance be retained for Sydney, the level of which requires further analysis.
- Review of judicial system completed and AFL Commission approved the introduction of a new structure, which would allow players to elect to accept a penalty without facing a Tribunal hearing. The system for 2005 will, among other things, also provide for all reports to be channelled through a Match Review Panel.
- Discussion document on revised drug code distributed to AFL clubs and AFL Players' Association proposing a new approach to deal with substances of abuse.
- Working group with representatives from The Law School, University of Melbourne, The Statewide Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault and the AFL to develop strategies to deal with sexual harassment, discrimination and assault.





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2004 Objectives and Outcomes

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES 2004

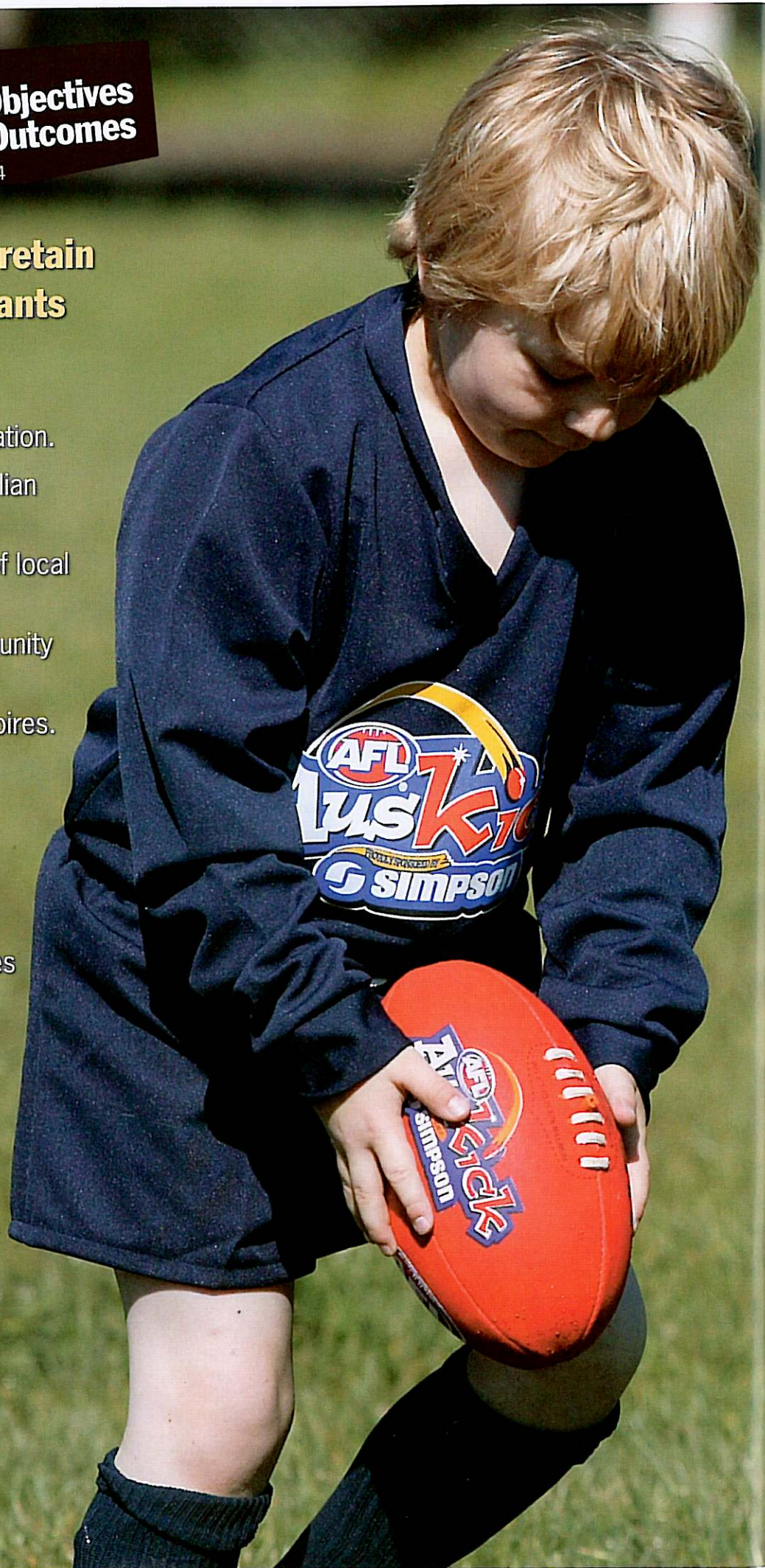
Objective // Recruit, retain and develop participants

Major initiatives

- Drive high levels of participation.
- Improve presence of Australian Football in schools.
- Support and development of local community clubs.
- Support and develop community leagues and clubs.
- Recruit, train and retain umpires.
- Utilise Australian football as a vehicle to support indigenous communities.
- Capture and develop talented footballers.
- Recruit and educate coaches and sports trainers.

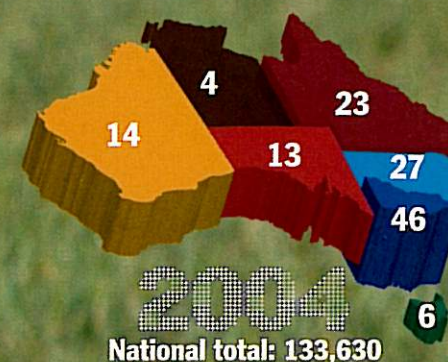
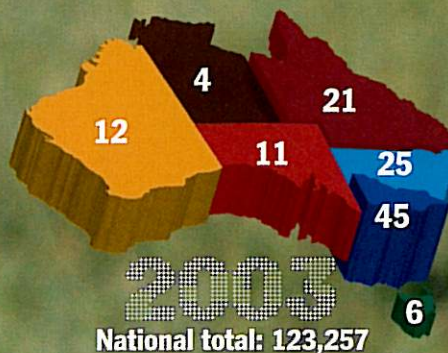
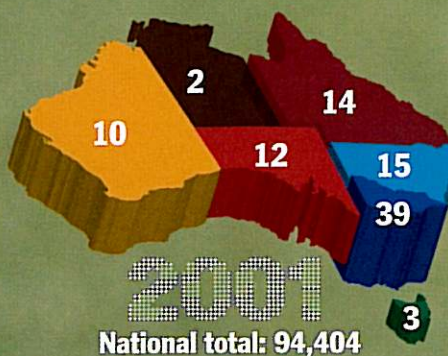
HEALTHY SIGNS:

AFL Auskick participation around Australia again rose, with an 8.2 per cent increase in numbers compared to 2003.



Measurable outcomes

- AFL Auskick reached record level of 133,630, up 8.2 per cent on 2003, with all states and territories recording increases. During the past four years, Queensland has increased its AFL Auskick registrations by almost 300 per cent. Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales have the largest number of registered participants in AFL Auskick.
- Overall participation reached a record 516,043 up seven per cent on 2003.
- In 2004, there were 2548 football clubs throughout Australia fielding 11,171 competition teams.
- \$23 million invested in game development programs in partnership with states and territories.
- Partnership with Cricket Australia, Netball Australia secures Federal Government funding of \$90 million over next three years to address childhood obesity through sports participation in schools.
- 5000 volunteers recognised for their role in community clubs throughout Australia.
- The number of school teams increased by 2.6 per cent to 4722 teams.
- AFL Recreational Football was launched.
- The AFL Club Management Program was launched and distributed to 2500 community clubs and 300 community leagues.
- Community umpiring numbers increased by 13 per cent.
- AFL Umpire Mentoring Program launched.
- Four per cent increase in coach accreditation.
- 16 per cent of AFL listed players are graduates of the AIS/AFL Academy.



State-by-state AFL Auskick participation over the past five years

(figures represent each thousand participants)



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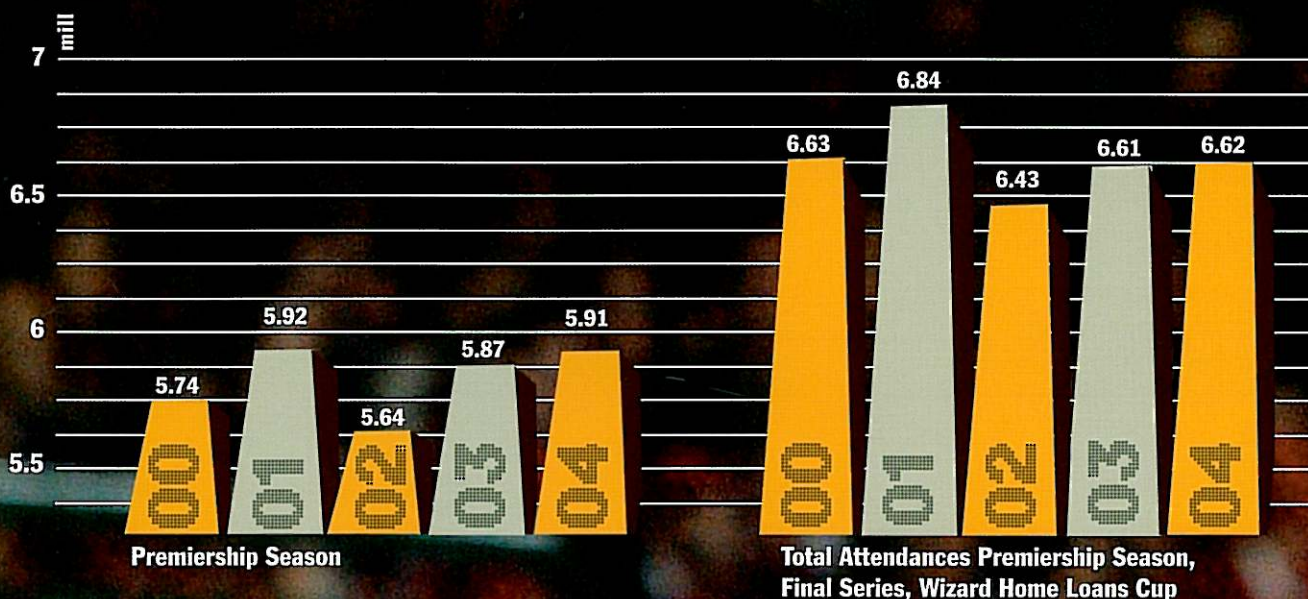
2004 Objectives and Outcomes

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES 2004

Objective // To connect with fans and community

Major initiatives

- Grow the impact of community training camps scheduled in 16 regions throughout Australia for AFL clubs.
- Utilise the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the AFL Players' Association and more effectively manage player appearances.
- Retain Jason McCartney and Robert DiPierdomenico as AFL Ambassadors in key areas of game development.
- To keep game affordable and maximise attendances.
- To work closely with the AFL broadcast partners to maximise the national television audience for matches and major AFL events.
- To expand the national radio broadcasting of AFL matches.
- To continue to enhance the content for the AFL/Telstra website network.



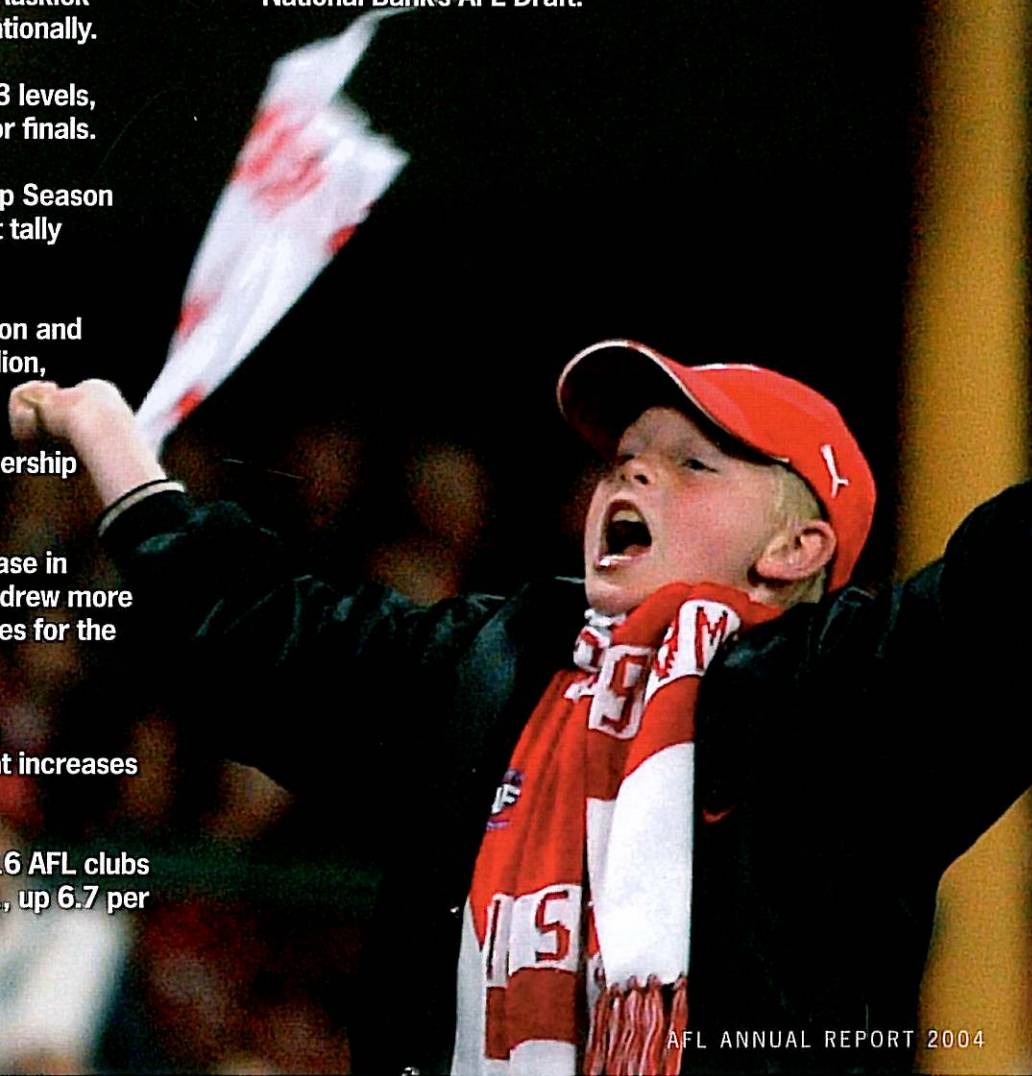
**AFL
Premier League
Season
attendance
third
highest ever**

CHEER, CHEER:

This young Sydney fan gets the crowd behind his beloved Swans at the SCG.

Measurable outcomes

- AFL clubs visit 300 primary schools and reach 60,000 children, 75 secondary schools reaching 15,000 students, hold superclinics for 8500 children, visit 50 hospitals, aged care facilities and conduct forums for 4300 people during community training camps.
- New Collective Bargaining Agreement and improved management of player appearances delivers almost 800 per cent increase in activity by players in junior clubs, AFL Auskick centres, primary/secondary schools. In 2003, players spent 1464 hours making appearances to support AFL Game Development. In 2004, under new CBA, players devoted more than 13,000 hours to support AFL Game Development – this excludes the 15 half-day appearances per player for club-related activity.
- AFL clubs run various school based programs including *Care for Kids*, *Eagles Rock My School* and *Team Swans*.
- Jason McCartney youth leadership forums attended by 12,000 young people nationally.
- Robert "Dipper" DiPierdomenico AFL Auskick roadshow reached 21,000 children nationally.
- General admission prices held at 2003 levels, budget seating category introduced for finals.
- Attendance for Toyota AFL Premiership Season reached 5.91 million, the third highest tally on record.
- Total attendance for premiership season and Toyota AFL Finals Series was 6.37 million, the fourth highest tally on record.
- Record crowds attracted to AFL premiership season games in Brisbane and Perth.
- St Kilda experienced the largest increase in crowds of 26.7 per cent on 2003 and drew more than 400,000 people to its home games for the first time.
- Fremantle (18.4 per cent) and Carlton (18.2 per cent) also enjoyed significant increases in crowds compared to 2003.
- Aggregate membership sales for the 16 AFL clubs reached an all-time record of 494,311, up 6.7 per cent on 2003.
- On average, 3.85 million people watched AFL premiership season matches each weekend on Network Ten and the Nine Network in the five mainland capital cities.
- Fox Footy Channel's three live matches per weekend averaged more than 150,000 viewers.
- The AFL/Telstra network remains the most popular sports website in Australia.
- More than one million people per week listen to AFL matches on radio. Agreement with Sydney-based Radio 2 extended to broadcast all games involving the Sydney Swans and six matches involving the Brisbane Lions in 2004. Agreement concluded with Triple M Sydney and Brisbane to broadcast all games involving the Sydney Swans and Brisbane Lions in 2005.
- AFL/Telstra website network achieves 24 per cent growth in unique visitors and introduces new features including live audio broadcasts of events including the Australian Football Hall of Fame induction dinner, Carlton Draught All-Australian team announcement, Brownlow Medal and National Bank's AFL Draft.





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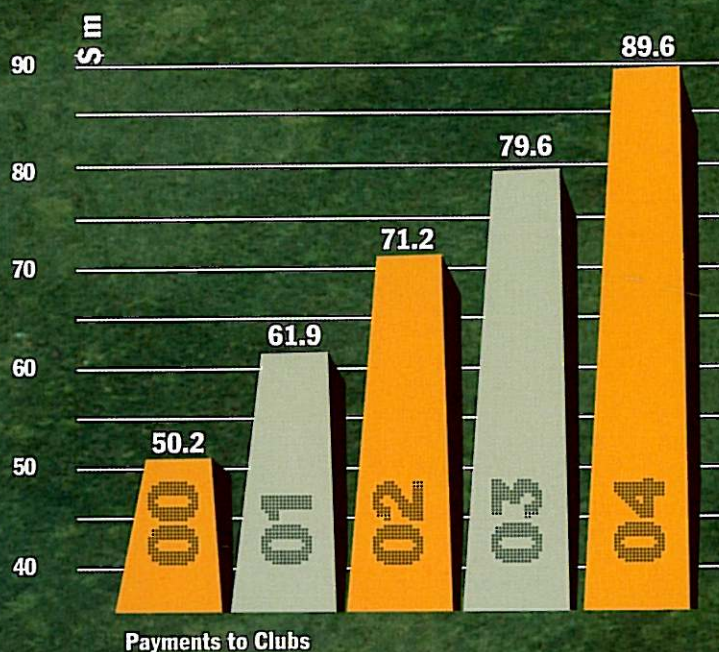
2004 Objectives and Outcomes

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES 2004

Objective // To manage responsibly and strive for financial growth and stability

Major initiatives

- Maintain Competitive Balance Fund
- Seek continued growth in competition revenue
- Develop partnerships with governments
- Identify shared service initiatives to reduce industry costs



AFL distributions to clubs over the past five years



Measurable outcomes

- Kangaroos allocated \$1 million, Western Bulldogs \$1.5 million and Melbourne \$1.5 million from the Competitive Balance Fund.
- AFL distributions to clubs reached a record of \$89.6 million.
- AFL revenue increased by six per cent to \$196.3 million compared to \$185.9 million in 2003.
- New sponsorship agreement secured with Toyota as the AFL's premier partner including the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, Toyota AFL Finals Series, Toyota Mark and Goal of the Year and Brownlow Medal.
- Carlton and United Beverages retained as official beer and wine of the AFL.
- New agreement concluded with Coca-Cola as official soft drink of the AFL and official sports drink of the AFL (Powerade).
- Agreement with Northern Territory Government concluded for Western Bulldogs to play a premiership season game in Darwin for three years.
- New agreement with Australian Capital Territory Government for the Kangaroos to play three premiership season games in Canberra for a further three years.
- Victorian Government allocates \$300,000 over two years to introduce AFL programs in various multicultural communities.
- AFL now processing payrolls for Western Bulldogs, St Kilda, Melbourne and the Brisbane Lions, AFL Northern Territory, AFL (NSW-ACT) and Football Victoria.
- Agreement reached for AFL to process membership for Western Bulldogs.
- National group insurance scheme managed by the AFL reduced insurance costs for community football throughout Australia by \$2 million.
- Group insurance program managed by the AFL has led to reduced costs for AFL clubs of \$200,000 in 2004 after a saving of \$300,000 in 2003.

WELCOME ABOARD:

Toyota became the AFL's Premier Partner in 2004, a year that climaxed with the Toyota AFL Grand Final at the MCG in September between Port Adelaide and the Brisbane Lions.



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**Chairman's
Report** Ron Evans

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Collaboration a key to our future

While the key outcomes of 2004 are covered in detail in this annual report and generally indicate the game has never been healthier, I would like to focus on a key challenge that I believe our clubs and our executive team face in the near future.

As I mentioned in my summary of the 2003 season in last year's AFL Annual Report, the genesis of that challenge was provided by AFL Legend, Ron Barassi, more than 12 months ago when he posed the following on-going reality check:

"No matter how good you are," he said, "you can always get better".

During 2004, I posed this challenge to the clubs and our executives: how can we achieve double digit growth in all controllable areas during the next 12 to 24 months and having achieved the target, how can we keep doing it?

How can we, the AFL and our clubs, collectively continue to meet the changing needs of our competition?

It's not easy, but there are some fundamentals. The first is an essential ingredient of any successful football side – teamwork.

If our clubs, competition and the game are going to meet Barassi's challenge, we must work together more effectively than ever before.

This effectiveness is best discussed as ultimate competition between the clubs on the field and ultimate collaboration between the AFL and our clubs off the field.

Collaboration is represented three ways – AFL to clubs, clubs to AFL and club to club.

For too long, we have all failed this challenge.

We have improved, and continue to improve, but there is so much to be done to get to the point where we are all working together to achieve what's best for all.

As a starting point, the AFL will support clubs financially, intellectually, and in every way in between.

It is an enormous responsibility that signifies, in my view, the maturity the AFL has reached as an organisation.

It may seem strange to discuss maturity for a body that had its origins back in the 1890s, but it's true.

It wasn't until the 1980s that the convergence of business and football was viewed with any degree of seriousness or relevance.

It's surely with us now, and the administration of the game will become more and more businesslike.

We must be ahead of that transition, rather than responding when it's too late.

To do that, we must have the best people in the right places to ensure we reach the growth targets we set.

We must have the right structure to meet the changing needs of the game, its supporters, the clubs, and the businesses supporting the game.

There is no excuse for us to not understand our roles. We are all in it to grow the game.

If the AFL is successful, it flows to the clubs; if a club has success it flows back to the AFL. There is no excuse for misunderstanding between us.

If we work together, we can reduce the load on each of us. The sharing of services is a potential boon to the industry, and more of it will occur in the future.

The AFL is currently working with several clubs to provide expertise in areas ranging from financial management and payroll service to membership.

A very public, and vital form of sharing the load is through the Competitive Balance Fund.

This is about the entire AFL sharing the largesse that comes from the game as a whole; the wealthy sharing with those with less opportunity. This concept is now a fundamental plank of the AFL.

Those clubs that have sought financial support from the AFL via the Competitive Balance Fund should not feel subservient, inadequate or excluded from the dialogue.

Quite the contrary; if we are 16 working together, we are much stronger and effective than, say, 12 working together, and four sitting on the sidelines gritting their teeth.

I am sure the working partnership between the AFL and clubs will continue to evolve during the next 12 months.

If we act collaboratively and for the good of the game, we will achieve our growth targets.

Executive Change

I have been delighted with the way our administration has embraced change under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou.

The Demetriou executive has completed a very successful first year.

Andrew Demetriou's predecessor, Wayne Jackson, left a very stable and high quality administration, the foundations of a truly national competition, a developing national code now with record levels of participation and a financially strong AFL.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE:

AFL Chairman Ron Evans reflects on a successful 2004 with AFL Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou.





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Chairman's Report Ron Evans

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Our new executive team, appointed by Andrew and endorsed by the AFL Commission, has only one person in his former role – Ian Anderson, our General Manager of Finance and Administration. Adrian Anderson replaced Andrew Demetriou as General Manager, Football Operations after a successful legal career with Corrs Chambers Westgarth and has fitted into his role extremely well.

Both Ben Buckley, General Manager Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects and Gillon McLachlan, General Manager, Commercial Operations, have embraced their respective roles with expertise and enthusiasm.

Two other young executives – Andrew Dillon, General Manager, Legal and Business Affairs and David Matthews, General Manager, Game Development – have also impressed.

Two other new roles were also created. Colin McLeod (from Goldman Sachs JBWere) was appointed General Manager, Marketing and Communications while Tony Peek was appointed Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer. Both have contributed with great effect to the senior operating team.

Our executive was completed by the appointment of Dale Holmes as General Manager, AFL (NSW-ACT).

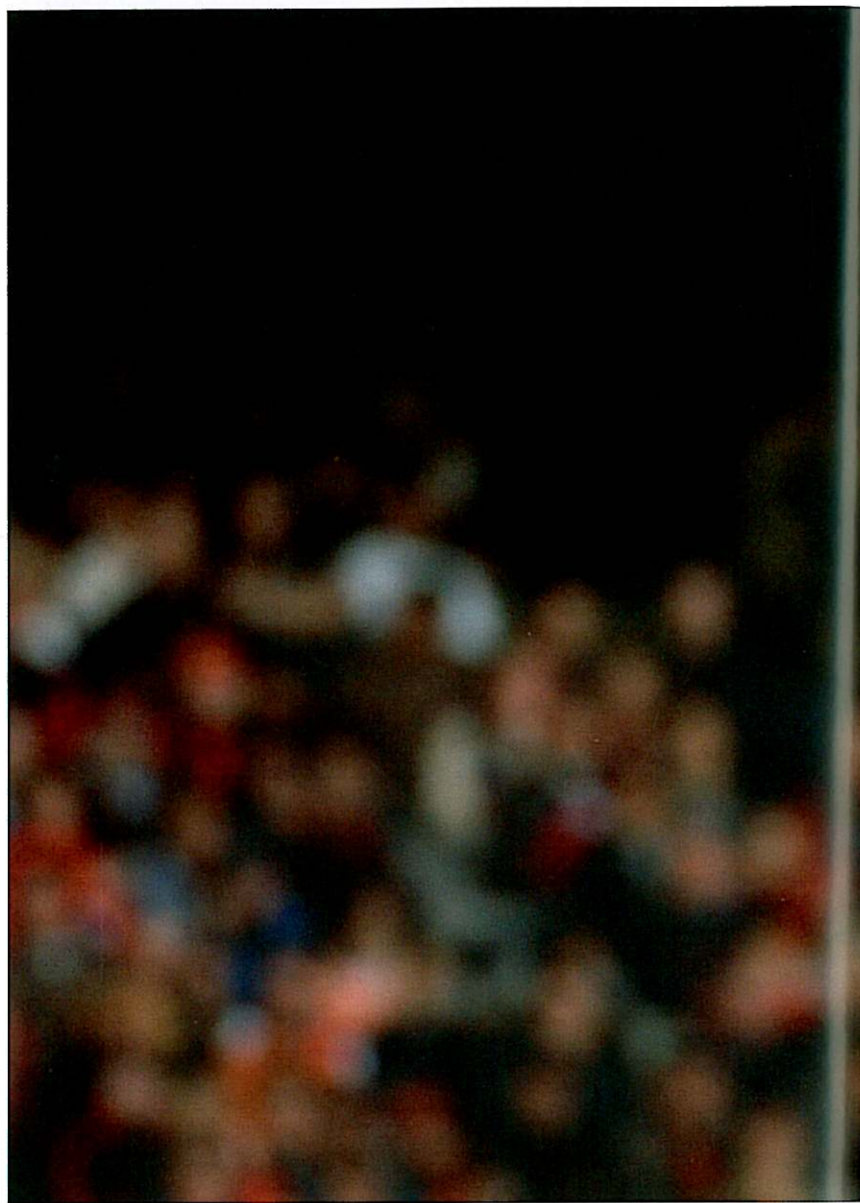
Collectively, the AFL executive team under the direction of Andrew Demetriou achieved outstanding results in 2004. I have had great pride in watching Andrew develop into an outstanding administrator.

He has followed the example set by other great leaders – he has transmitted his personal values – strength of character, resolve, integrity, honesty and loyalty while retaining the balance required to be great at business, and better at family. His team share these attributes.

Financial

While some of our clubs have some financial challenges, overall the AFL and our clubs achieved satisfactory financial results in 2004. Highlights of the AFL's financial performance included:

- A record operating surplus after interest and before distributions of \$124 million.
- Total distributions of \$120.8 million included \$89.6 million to AFL clubs including a special distribution of \$1.6 million shared by the 16 clubs.
- A net AFL surplus in 2004 of \$1.7 million, which was after payments of \$2.2 million relating to litigation by the Seven Network and \$1.5 million transferred to a facilities development reserve. The legal action by Seven is against our broadcast partners the Nine Network, Foxtel, Network Ten, Telstra and News Limited.

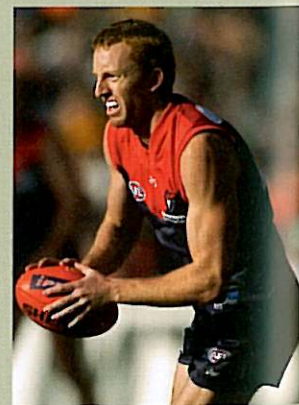


VALE: TROY BROADBRIDGE

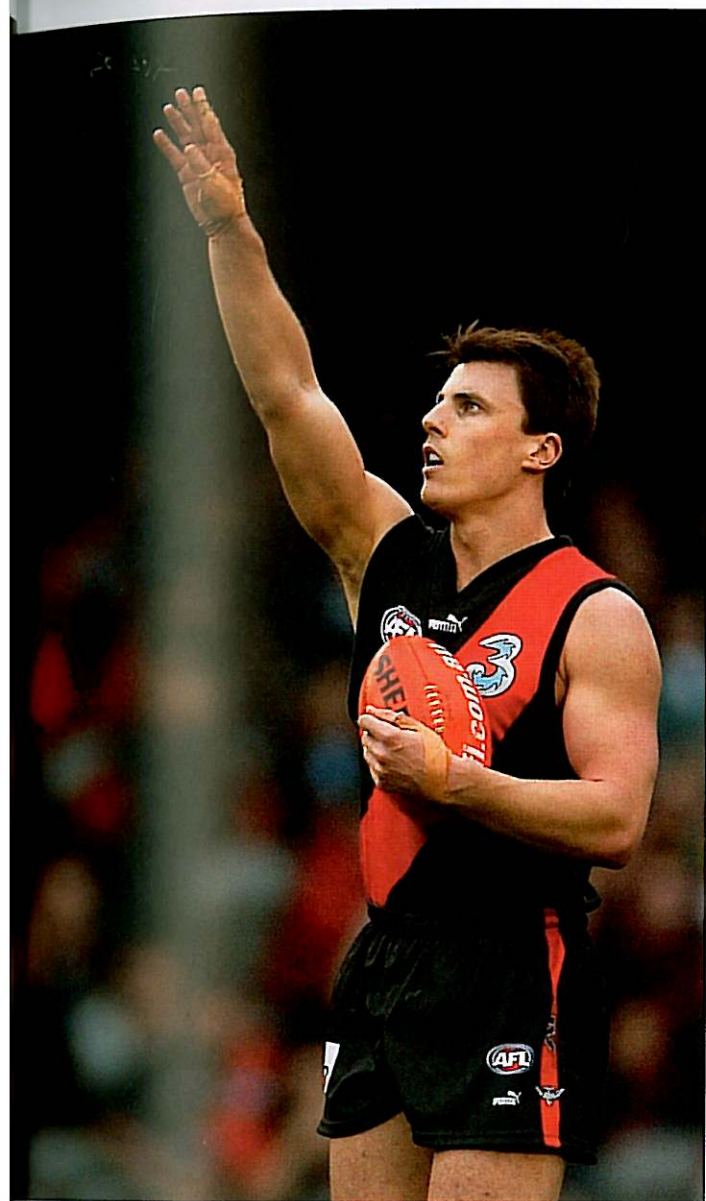
The horror and staggering death toll from the Asian tsunami disaster hit home to the AFL family with the death of Melbourne player Troy Broadbridge. News of his death was even more tragic as he had married in Melbourne only eight days earlier. His wife, Trisha, was injured by debris, but spared.

Broadbridge, 24, was swept away in the raging waters on Boxing Day, 2004, and it was not until January 3, 2005, that his body was identified by his father Wayne.

Broadbridge and his wife were honeymooning in Phuket, but had taken a day trip to the Phi Phi Island resort, which was overwhelmed by the tsunami. Broadbridge, who also played with the Port Adelaide Magpies, made his debut with Melbourne in 2001 and played 40 games, including 14 in 2004. His last match was in the losing elimination final against Essendon at the MCG. He was also a dual premiership player with Sandringham, Melbourne's VFL affiliate club. Broadbridge was farewelled at an emotional service on January 20. Our thoughts will always be with Trisha, the Broadbridge family and everyone associated with the Melbourne Football Club.



TRAGIC LOSS: Melbourne's Troy Broadbridge.



ON TARGET:

Essendon full-forward Matthew Lloyd lines-up for one of the 96 goals he kicked in the 2004 AFL premiership season.

Thanks

Our game is fortunate to have a high calibre AFL Commission overseeing its welfare and future direction. I greatly appreciate their commitment and thank all Commissioners for their wise counsel in directing the future path of AFL football throughout Australia and overseas.

Such counsel is not without scrutiny, challenge and criticism – as indeed it should be. Your Commission undertakes its responsibilities with relish and courage – I thank each member of the Commission for his contribution.

A special thanks to all AFL staff members for their contribution to 2004 and I am also pleased to acknowledge the efforts of our AFL club directors and executive staff who continue to make an outstanding contribution to our game.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank the millions of supporters who follow our clubs, attend games, and watch on television as well as the more than 50,000 volunteers who work for community football throughout Australia to ensure that some 2500 clubs can field more than 11,000 teams each week. They are the foundation on which the game is built.

Friends we miss

I'd also like to pay tribute to missing friends. Ben Buckley's wife Kim and Ian Anderson's wife Sharon passed away in the past 12 months. They were wonderful women, and I cannot imagine the gap they have left in the lives of Ben and Ian, their young children, and their extended families. Ben and Ian have been examples to all of us in coping with their loss while never failing to contribute in their highly pressured jobs.

They have reminded us so much about perspective. May I also take this opportunity to thank most sincerely the extended football family for the support they provided to Ben, Ian and their families.

Ron Evans,
Chairman,
AFL Commission

Acknowledgements

Our media partners again provided outstanding coverage of our game throughout Australia and we place great value on our relationship with Network Ten, the Nine Network and Foxtel, who between them broadcast every game of the premiership season, the finals and Wizard Home Loans Cup.

In addition, the AFL Telstra on-line network continued to be the most popular sports website in Australia while our radio partners in each of the mainland capital cities broadcast our games to every corner of the country.

News Limited is our other major media partner and the group's newspapers throughout Australia continued to provide extensive coverage of our clubs, players and, importantly, state and community based leagues.

We were pleased to welcome Toyota as our Premier Partner for 2004 to replace Carlton and United Beverages who took up a new category as the official beer and wine of the AFL. We look forward to building our relationship with Toyota and maintaining our association with CUB, a long time supporter of our clubs and the game.

I also wish to acknowledge the continued support of the AFL and our clubs provided by our corporate partners Coca-Cola, National Australia Bank, Qantas, Tatts Tipstar, Simpson, Wizard Home Loans, Telstra, Kellogg's, Reebok and the Intercontinental Hotels Group.



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AFL Commission

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Ron Evans – Chairman

Played 64 games and kicked 210 goals as a full-forward for Essendon from 1958 to 1962. Coleman Medallist as leading VFL goalkicker in 1959 and 1960. Played 60 games and kicked 271 goals for West Perth from 1963-1965. Leading WAFL goalkicker in 1963 with 97 goals. Represented WA five times. President of Essendon Football Club 1988 to 1992. Managing Director of Spotless Services Limited. Bachelor of Science (Melbourne University). Master of Business Administration (Monash University). Appointed to AFL Commission 1993, appointed Chairman 1998.

Andrew Demetriou

Played 103 games for North Melbourne and three for Hawthorn after being recruited in 1981 from Pascoe Vale Football Club. Became Managing Director of the Ruthinium Group, one of the world's largest manufacturers and distributors of acrylic teeth. He remains a board member of the Ruthinium Group, and non-executive Chairman of the Baxter Group, a public company. In 1998, was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the AFL Players' Association. Diploma of Education, La Trobe University. Bachelor of Arts, La Trobe University. Was AFL General Manager – Football Operations May 2000-September 2003. Appointed Chief Executive Officer, September 2003. Member of AFL Commission from 2003 as Chief Executive Officer.

Colin Carter

Senior Adviser to the Boston Consulting Group. Director of Wesfarmers Ltd, Origin Energy Ltd, Commonwealth Games Melbourne 2006 and Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships. Played a key role in the report, 'Establishing the Basis For Future Success', adopted by the VFL Commission in 1985 as the competition's national strategy. Worked with the VFL Commission and the MCC to develop the concept for the Great Southern Stand at the MCG. Director of Geelong Football Club 1987-1993. Bachelor of Commerce (Melbourne University). Master of Business Administration (Harvard University). Appointed to AFL Commission 1993.

Mike Fitzpatrick

Played 97 games with Subiaco from 1970 to 1974 and 150 games with Carlton from 1975-1983. Captained the Blues' premiership teams in 1981 and 1982, Managing Director and founder of Hastings Funds Management Ltd. Former director, CS First Boston. Previously held positions with Merrill Lynch in New York, Victorian Treasury and Telecom Australia. Former Melbourne Park Tennis Centre Trust member, former director of Carlton FC and former Chair of Australian Sports Commission. Vice-president of AFL Players' Association in early 1980s. In 1975 was a Rhodes Scholar from WA. Bachelor of Engineering (Hons.), University of WA. Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) Oxford University. Appointed to AFL Commission 2003.

**AFL COMMISSION 2004:**

(From left) Graeme John, Mike Fitzpatrick, Ron Evans (Chairman), Chris Langford, Andrew Demetriou (Chief Executive Officer), Bob Hammond, Colin Carter and Bill Kelty.

Bob Hammond

Played 234 matches for North Adelaide 1960-1973, 14 matches for Norwood 1974-1975 and seven matches for South Australia. Captained both SANFL clubs, played in three North Adelaide premiership teams and coached Norwood to two flags. Coached South Australia in State of Origin football in 1984 – the same year he coached Sydney for eight matches. Board member Norwood Football Club 1980-1990. Chairman of the Adelaide Football Club from 1991-2000. Life member of the SANFL and AFL. Proprietor of Half Case Warehouses, a chain of South Australian supermarkets from 1979-1989. Managing Director of Rail Road Services Pty Ltd, a transport, demolition, storage and rail maintenance business. Director of Festival City Broadcasters. Appointed to AFL Commission 2001.

Graeme John

Played 77 games for South Melbourne from 1964 to 1969 and kicked 97 goals. All-Australian player in 1966. 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 Deputy General Manager 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, Director of the Road Transport Forum, director and alternate Chairman of Australian Air Express. Appointed to AFL Commission 2000.

Bill Kelty

Member of National Labour Consultative Council since 1977; Committee for Melbourne since 1980 and member of Netforce since 1994. Director of Linfox Group, Director of the Australian Retirement Fund, Director of Hotel Leisure & Tourism Trust of Australia, Director of Industry Funds Investments Limited, Director of Bank of Queensland, Director of Virtual Communities, former Director, Superannuation Trust of Australia, Chairman of AFL SportsReady Limited, member of AFLPA Education & Training Board, member of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, member of the Australians for Just Refugee Program, Adjunct Professor in the Bowater School of Management and Marketing, Deakin University, trustee of the Linfox Classic Car Collection. Former ACTU Secretary. Appointed to AFL Commission 1998.

Chris Langford

Played 303 senior games for Hawthorn. Captain in 1994, vice-captain in 1993. Member of four day and four pre-season/night premiership teams. Represented Victoria in State of Origin on 15 occasions, and won the E.J. Whitten Medal as Victoria's best in 1987 and 1993. All-Australian in 1987 and 1994. Life member of the AFL. Bachelor of Architecture, University of Melbourne. Has more than 15 years experience in the property industry, and currently works with the Mirvac Group as Development Director (NSW). Director of the AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission since 1998. Appointed to AFL Commission 1999.





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**Chief Executive's
Report** Andrew Demetriou

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Fresh faces take up the challenge

As temporary trustees of Australia's only indigenous game, one of the key responsibilities of each administration is to leave our game in a better state than it was when we took office. This has been the driving force behind my first year as Chief Executive Officer of the AFL and in the first year of our new and enthusiastic executive team.

I am pleased to report that 2004 was very rewarding, personally, and by all objective measures, as our national competition continued to grow and mature and total participation reached record levels. One of the first challenges for the AFL Commission and our executive was to outline a strategic plan for 2004-2006, a plan which focused on four key policy areas:

1. Grow the game via appropriate policies – we strive to have an even competition where any club is capable of beating another on any given day or night to produce uncertainty of outcomes and drive supporter interest – regardless of the relative financial strength of each club.

2. Connect with fans and community – we recognise that the supporters of our clubs and the game itself are Australian football's most important asset and through a range of activities, we promote high levels of public interest by building the strongest consumer brand position in Australian sport.

3. Recruit, retain and develop participants – we strive for high levels of participation by encouraging well managed community football programs for people of all ages in partnership with our clubs, players and state and territory bodies.

4. Manage responsibly, strive for financial growth and stability – we strive to continue to build a strong financial base for the AFL competition and maximise the economic benefits for our clubs, players, supporters, football fraternity and the community at large.

Everyone associated with our game should be pleased with our continued progress during the past year.

History making

The 2004 Toyota AFL Grand Final made history as the first premiership decider contested by two clubs based outside Victoria.

In a classic contest before a sell out crowd – watched by the fourth largest national television audience for a grand final in history – Port Adelaide won its first AFL premiership, thwarting the Brisbane Lions' attempt to equal the record held by Collingwood of four successive premierships (1927-1930).

The significance of our national competition was brought home to me during Grand Final week when Brisbane Lions' coach Leigh Matthews made the following comments:

"I think the national competition is fantastic. And I would think I'd think that way even if I was involved in Victoria.

"As a person who has loved football and lived it – it's been my life – the greatest thing I've seen is the development of the national competition.

"It's the most bonding thing in our sport ...".

That observation must have been particularly rewarding for all involved in the vision that led to the national competition – our clubs which gave up their traditional powers in the early 1980s to appoint an independent Commission to run the competition and to those key administrators who drove that national vision – Dr Allen Aylett, the late Jack Hamilton and Alan Schwab, Ross Oakley and my predecessor, Wayne Jackson.

We achieved another important milestone in 2004 in the development of the national game when the Western Bulldogs played Port Adelaide in Darwin.

This meant games for premiership points were played in all states and territories for the first time in 108 seasons.

While the dynamic environment in which we operate continues to throw up many challenges, complacency is the only thing which will prevent our national competition and the game itself from reaching even greater heights in the future.

The AFL Commission and our executive team will not allow complacency to get in the way of the future.

FULL POINTS:

Adelaide on-baller
Tyson Edwards
celebrates a
goal, much to the
disappointment
of Geelong's
Darren Milburn.



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Chief Executive's Report

Andrew Demetriou

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Key outcomes

Attendances for the 2004 Toyota AFL Premiership Season reached 5.91 million, the third highest total on record and an increase of 0.6 per cent on 2003.

This level was achieved despite the MCG being almost 30,000 below capacity for the second successive year due to the reconstruction of the northern stand for the Commonwealth Games and with matches scheduled at smaller venues in Launceston, Canberra and Darwin.

Record crowds attended premiership season games in Perth and Brisbane.

- Free to air television audiences grew a further 2.8 per cent on 2003 to an average of almost four million people per week. In the last two seasons, national audiences have grown by nearly 13 per cent.
- In addition, more than 150,000 people per week watched premiership season matches on the Fox Footy Channel.
- Our clubs produced another outstanding result with total membership reaching an all-time record of more than 494,000. This was 6.7 per cent up on 2003.
- Total participation in our game at a community level reached a record 516,043, a seven per cent increase on 2003 while AFL Auskick also achieved a new all-time high of 133,630 registered participants, up 8.2 per cent on 2003.

Financial result

The AFL achieved a net surplus of \$1.7 million, which exceeded the budget of \$1 million. The result was even more pleasing given that it included unbudgeted legal fees of \$2.2 million associated with litigation by the Seven Network.

The key highlights of this result included:

- Revenue increased by nine per cent to \$186.3 million compared to \$170.9 million in 2003.
- Expenditure increased by 11 per cent to \$58 million. Most of these cost increases were related to the additional revenue earned in 2004 from areas such as corporate hospitality, corporate partners and consumer products.
- Operating surplus before distributions increased by \$9.3 million to \$124 million.
- Total distributions increased by 10 per cent to \$120.8 million. A total of \$89.6 million was distributed to AFL clubs, including a special distribution of \$1.6 million, which was an increase of 13 per cent on the 2003 total of \$79.6 million.
- A net surplus of \$1.7 million after a transfer of \$1.5 million to a facilities' development reserve.

EAGLE SOARS:

Ashley Sampi's towering grab against Melbourne in round seven earned the Eagle the Toyota Mark of the Year award.

Picture: Michael Dodge (courtesy Herald Sun)

Competitive Balance Fund

Consistent with our commitment to doing all we reasonably can to support our 16 clubs, the AFL Commission provided competitive balance funding as follows in 2004:

- Kangaroos, \$1 million.
- Melbourne, \$1.5 million.
- Western Bulldogs, \$1.5 million.

Hall of Fame and Sensation

During October, we were advised by the company operating the AFL Hall of Fame and Sensation at the QV complex in Melbourne, Spyglass Pty Ltd, that Spyglass had appointed KordaMentha as voluntary administrators.

Spyglass operated the Hall of Fame and Sensation under licence. The AFL did not invest in the project.

The administrators were confident of finding a buyer for the complex.

The AFL continues to work with the administrator to ensure the best possible outcome is achieved for this important project.

Premier Partner

In February, we announced an agreement with Toyota to become the Premier Partner of the AFL including the premiership season, finals series including Grand Final, the Brownlow Medal and the Mark and Goal of the Year awards.

Our agreement with Toyota is for three years from 2004 with further options to extend at the conclusion of the contract.

Toyota is a major international company and has made a substantial commitment as our Premier Partner and through marketing and advertising activity to support the sponsorship.

We were also able to retain Carlton and United Beverages as our official wine and beer supplier after being our Premier Partner from 2001 until the agreement with Toyota.

Conference with clubs

To strengthen the partnership between the AFL and our clubs, we held the first conference between club chief executive officers and the AFL executive to discuss and develop key strategic issues.

The major issue identified by the conferences with our club Chief Executives was the need to develop a financial strategy for the AFL post 2006 with key challenges being how do we grow the revenue of the AFL and our clubs and what are the priorities for allocating the revenue. This will be a major item on our strategic planning agenda during 2005.





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Chief Executive's Report Andrew Demetriou

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES 2004

Community issue

Early in 2004, allegations of sexual assault were made against some AFL players.

We make no comment about the allegations other than the due process of the law was the appropriate course to follow.

We find any form of violence towards women abhorrent and are committed to taking a community leadership position on the issue just as we have done with racial and religious vilification and drugs in sport.

In response to the allegations, we appointed a working group to advise the AFL on a strategy to deal with a range of issues including sexual harassment, discrimination, misconduct, assault and attitudes towards women.

The working group, which reports to me, includes:

- Professor Jenny Morgan, Law Faculty, University of Melbourne.
- Lyn Walker, Director, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.
- Sen. Sgt. Sue Clark, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Co-ordination Office, Victoria Police.
- Pam O'Neill, CASA Forum (Centres Against Sexual Assault).
- Assistant Commissioner Leigh Gassner, Co-Chair, Victorian Government's Statewide Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault.
- AFL General Manager, Legal and Business Affairs, Andrew Dillon and Tony Peek, Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer, who has co-ordinated the working group's activities.

The group has proposed a number of initiatives including:

- Potential rule change in relation to the relevance of sexual assault to penalties imposed on players.
- Development of best practice sexual harassment policies and procedures.
- Development of organisational policies and procedures at all levels of the game to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women.
- Education of AFL players, administrators and other officials, as well as young players coming into the AFL system.
- Shaping initiatives developed at the AFL level for implementation in the community club network.
- Participation in a public education campaign on violence against women.

A new education program was trialed with a group of players from the Western Bulldogs during November and will be delivered to all AFL clubs during 2005.

The education program was developed by Dr Angela Williams, a Clinical Physician with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, and Patrick Tidmarsh, a counsellor with the Adolescent Forensic Health Service in Melbourne.

The other initiatives proposed by the working group will be considered by the AFL Commission for implementation in 2005 after consultation with our AFL clubs, the AFL Players' Association and a wide variety of community organisations including the Office of Women's Policy, the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Pru Goward, Centres Against Sexual Assault and Ministers for Sport and Women's Policy at a Federal and State level.



Location allowance

During 2004, we reviewed the location allowance applicable to the Brisbane Lions and Sydney.

Other allowances that form part of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement – e.g. additional service agreements, injury and veterans – will be part of a review of the Collective Bargaining Agreement in 2005.

The Brisbane Lions and Sydney have had a location allowance in various forms since the early 1990s.

From time to time, the AFL Commission has adopted strategies to support clubs entering the competition – for example, the priority draft selections provided to the West Coast Eagles in the late 1980s when the club was struggling on and off the field.

In our view, the location allowance has assisted the stabilisation of the Brisbane Lions and Sydney playing lists. Both clubs have also done an outstanding job in building



their infrastructure, support staff and player welfare programs. Sydney still has some financial challenges but has had a significant turnaround, particularly in the last 12 months.

Our latest analysis indicates that the so-called 'go home' factor when players want to return to their home state is an issue for all clubs from time to time.

The Brisbane Lions and Sydney, however, are more exposed to the 'go home' factor than other clubs because of their reliance on draftees from outside their respective states.

In 2004, Sydney had 11 NSW players on its list.

The Brisbane Lions had eight Queenslanders on their list.

We have also reviewed existing player contractual arrangements of both clubs.

Having considered these and a range of other issues, the AFL Commission resolved:

- That the location allowance cease at the end of 2006.
- That a cost of living allowance be retained for the Sydney

Swans post-2006 – the level of that allowance requires further analysis and discussion with the Swans before the Commission makes a final determination. As part of the current Sydney allowance, cost of living is a nominal seven per cent and linked to the cost of housing.

- That the current rules 10.14 and 10.15 be retained.

These rules give the Commission discretion to determine the total player payments for the Brisbane Lions and Sydney from time to time. We are still concerned, however, about the number of players the Brisbane Lions and Sydney have to import relative to all other clubs.

We are also concerned that despite great progress, first choice athletes are still not playing our game, particularly in Greater Sydney and south-east Queensland and we have to identify a breakthrough strategy which attracts athletes not playing Australian football without interfering with the current talented player pathway.

BREAKTHROUGH:

High emotions at AAMI Stadium as Port Adelaide players Dean Brogan and Peter Burgoyne celebrate their preliminary final victory over St Kilda.



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Chief Executive's Report

Andrew Demetriou

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES 2004

MCG finals

One disappointing outcome of 2004 was our inability to negotiate a new agreement with the Melbourne Cricket Club and MCG Trust to give us the right to schedule matches in the first three weeks of the finals based on a simple principle – that clubs earning the right to host a final in their home state based on their performance during the premiership season, should have the right to do so.

We acknowledge that the Brisbane Lions were disadvantaged by having to play a preliminary final at the MCG (in which they defeated Geelong) when they had earned the right to host that match at the Gabba.

Adelaide and the West Coast Eagles have also been disadvantaged in past years.

We will continue to seek a solution to this issue so that our finals scheduling in future passes the fundamental test of fairness for our clubs and their supporters.

Seven litigation

The AFL incurred legal costs of \$2.2 million in 2004 defending legal action taken by the Seven Network against various parties including News Limited, Telstra, Network Ten, the Nine Network, Foxtel and the AFL in relation to the awarding of various AFL rights from 2002 which had previously been held by Seven.

Seven alleges various breaches of the Trade Practices Act and seeks a wide range of orders including damages.

The AFL will vigorously defend this action.

Childhood obesity

In partnership with Cricket Australia and Netball Australia we presented a proposal to the Prime Minister, Mr John Howard, for funding to address the community health issue of childhood obesity.

The Federal Government subsequently allocated \$90 million over three years to address childhood obesity through sports participation.

The implementation of the program was still to be finalised at the time of completing this report but we are looking forward to working with Federal and State Governments and with cricket and netball to promote exercise and health messages to children using sport as the vehicle.

Players, clubs, supporters

Our players continue to drive interest in our game week in, week out through their athletic ability, courage and commitment.

When you consider the role of young players in many of the highlights of 2004 the future of our game is in very capable hands:

- The emergence of Geelong and St Kilda as preliminary finalists, both with very talented young lists and progressive coaches.

- At age 21, Chris Judd of the West Coast Eagles became one of the youngest winners of the Brownlow Medal when he polled 30 votes to win the 2004 award after earning All-Australian honours for the first time. He went on to also win his first Eagles' best and fairest.
- Nick Riewoldt, another 21-year-old, took more marks in a single season, 246, than any player in history, was named All-Australian for the first time and won his second St Kilda best and fairest.
- Daniel Wells, 19, made a significant contribution to the Kangaroos' season and also won the Toyota AFL Goal of the Year for his effort against Fremantle in round 15.
- Ashley Sampi, 20, of the West Coast Eagles, won the Toyota AFL Mark of the Year after taking one of the most spectacular high marks in the history of our game against Melbourne at the MCG in round seven.
- Jared Rivers, 20, the 2004 National Bank's AFL Rising Star emerged as a key defender for Melbourne.

Premiers

I have deliberately left the best to last. In winning its first AFL premiership, Port Adelaide again overcame the loss through serious injury of key players and the impact of defeat in recent finals.

Under coach, Mark Williams, the Power has finished in first place after the past three premiership seasons – an outstanding record of consistent, high level performance.

The Williams family's contribution to our game via Port Adelaide – in particular with Mark's father, the legendary Fos Williams, and through Mark as a player with Port Adelaide in the SANFL, Collingwood and Brisbane and an assistant coach at Essendon – is nothing short of extraordinary.

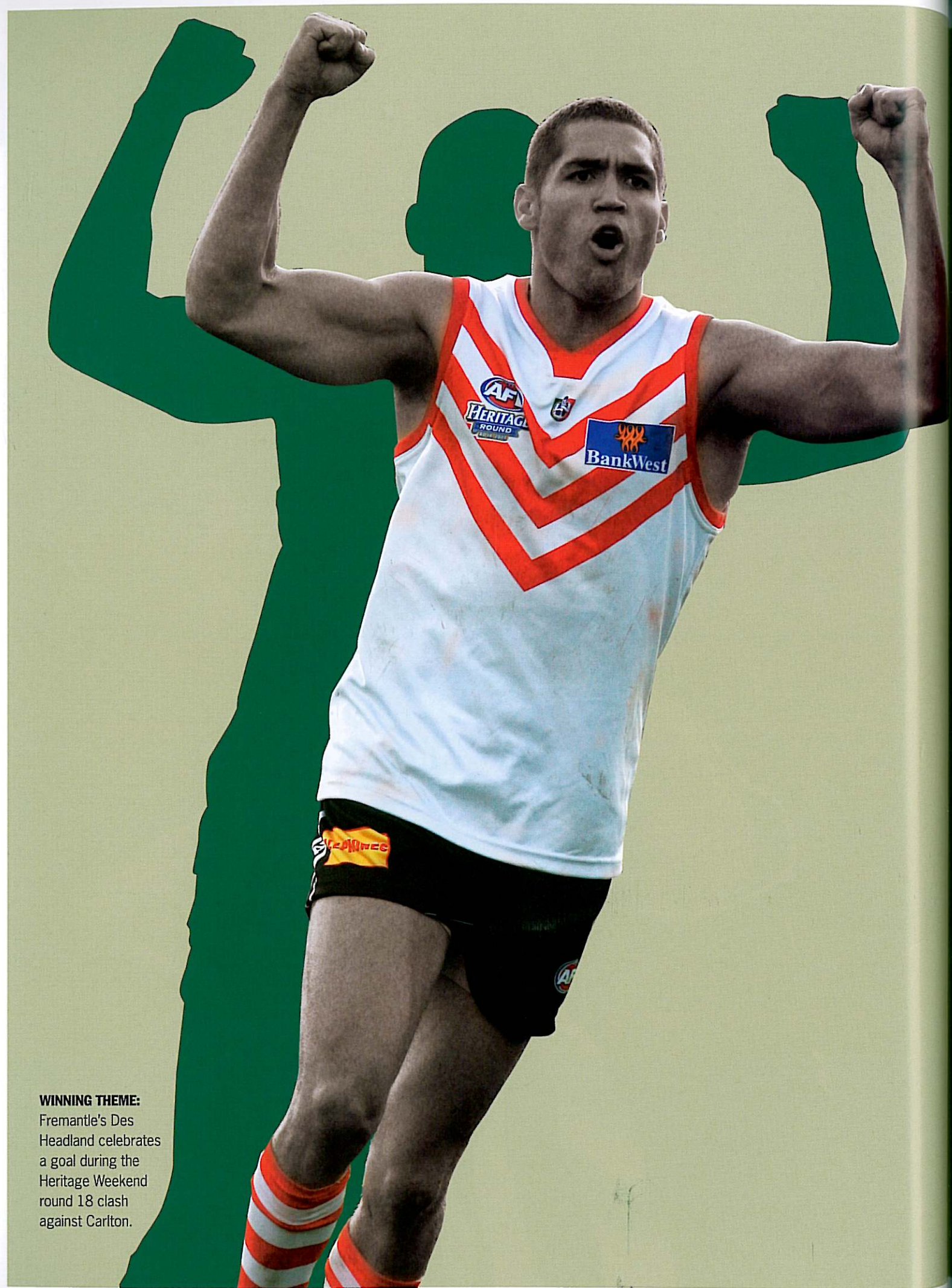
For Port Adelaide to win an AFL premiership after just eight seasons in the competition is a wonderful achievement particularly when you consider the Power downed defending triple premiers, the Brisbane Lions, to claim the ultimate prize.

Andrew Demetriou,
Chief Executive Officer,
Australian Football League

RUCK DUEL:

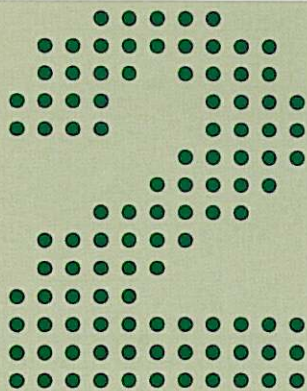
Collingwood big man Anthony Rocca and Adelaide's Matthew Clarke contest a boundary throw-in during the round nine clash at Telstra Dome.





WINNING THEME:

Fremantle's Des Headland celebrates a goal during the Heritage Weekend round 18 clash against Carlton.



Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects

SECTION 2

GENERAL MANAGER // BEN BUCKLEY

The importance of media rights to the AFL – in terms of revenue and exposure – was underlined in 2004 when a new department (Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects) was formed to manage this most crucial of AFL assets. In addition, this department is responsible for steering the AFL's strategic direction on behalf of the game's stakeholders and managing major initiatives across all departments including venue agreements and the AFL fixture.

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Report Ben Buckley**

BROADCASTING, STRATEGY AND MAJOR PROJECTS

More fans tuning in to our game

In 2004, a new department, Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects was added to the organisational structure as part of an overall AFL restructure. Its role includes:

Broadcasting: To manage the AFL's primary media asset of domestic and international television rights which account for approximately 60 per cent of the AFL's income.

This includes the negotiation and sale of this package of rights in addition to working with the AFL's broadcast partners on program scheduling, fixturing, production operations and relationship management.

Additional to domestic and international television rights the department is responsible for the sale and management of radio rights, archival film rights and is responsible for setting the strategy and the execution of negotiations for the future sale of media rights across all media platforms including new media rights such as the internet and mobile telephone rights.

Strategy: The department is also responsible for working with all stakeholders within the wider football industry and the AFL in setting the strategic agenda and creating the AFL Strategic Plan.

This involves working across all AFL departments in the development of strategic policy and plans as well as working closely with clubs and state affiliates in the creation of their own strategic plans.

Major Projects: This area has been created to work on major initiatives that cross all areas of the AFL's business operations. Examples of work undertaken include the creation of the annual competition fixture, venue and stadia user agreements, the development of playing and spectator facilities around the country and working with state governments on partnerships to grow the game.

NUMBER ONE:

Network 10's coverage of the AFL Grand Final between Port Adelaide and the Brisbane Lions was the most watched sports program on TV in 2004.

BROADCASTING

In 2004 the AFL successfully extended its match-day TV broadcasts to more Australians than ever before. It is believed that in round six of the 2004 season more people watched a single round of AFL matches than ever before.

The cumulative total of the average viewers of the five free-to-air and three subscription TV (FOXTEL) games totalled almost 4.9 million viewers.

For the year, the AFL achieved a cumulative total of average viewers of more than four million people per week (including both free-to-air and FOXTEL games).

Extending the reach and coverage of AFL games from a broadcasting perspective remains paramount to the AFL. The game continues to attract appeal across all demographic groups (especially the key 25-54 group) among men and women, and in 2004 the AFL continued to extend our lead over all other sports as the leading sports broadcasting property in the country.

In addition to our impressive TV broadcast numbers, the AFL attracts a weekly radio listener audience around Australia of more than one million people per week.

The AFL's media partners continued to dominate the Australian media industry in 2004. Network's Nine and Ten (and their regional sub-licensees – Southern Cross TV and WIN TV), Foxtel, News Limited, Austereo, Southern Cross Radio, DMG, ABC Radio and Telstra BigPond extended their coverage and presentation of the game and continued to build audiences. Each enjoyed either strong market share or revenue gains and industry-leading status in their key market segments.

The AFL also consistently integrated campaigns and created more cross-media and cross-platform promotional/marketing/sponsor and content opportunities than any other sports property in the country. As a result, the AFL reached more supporters in 2004 than ever before and created greater value for our corporate partners.

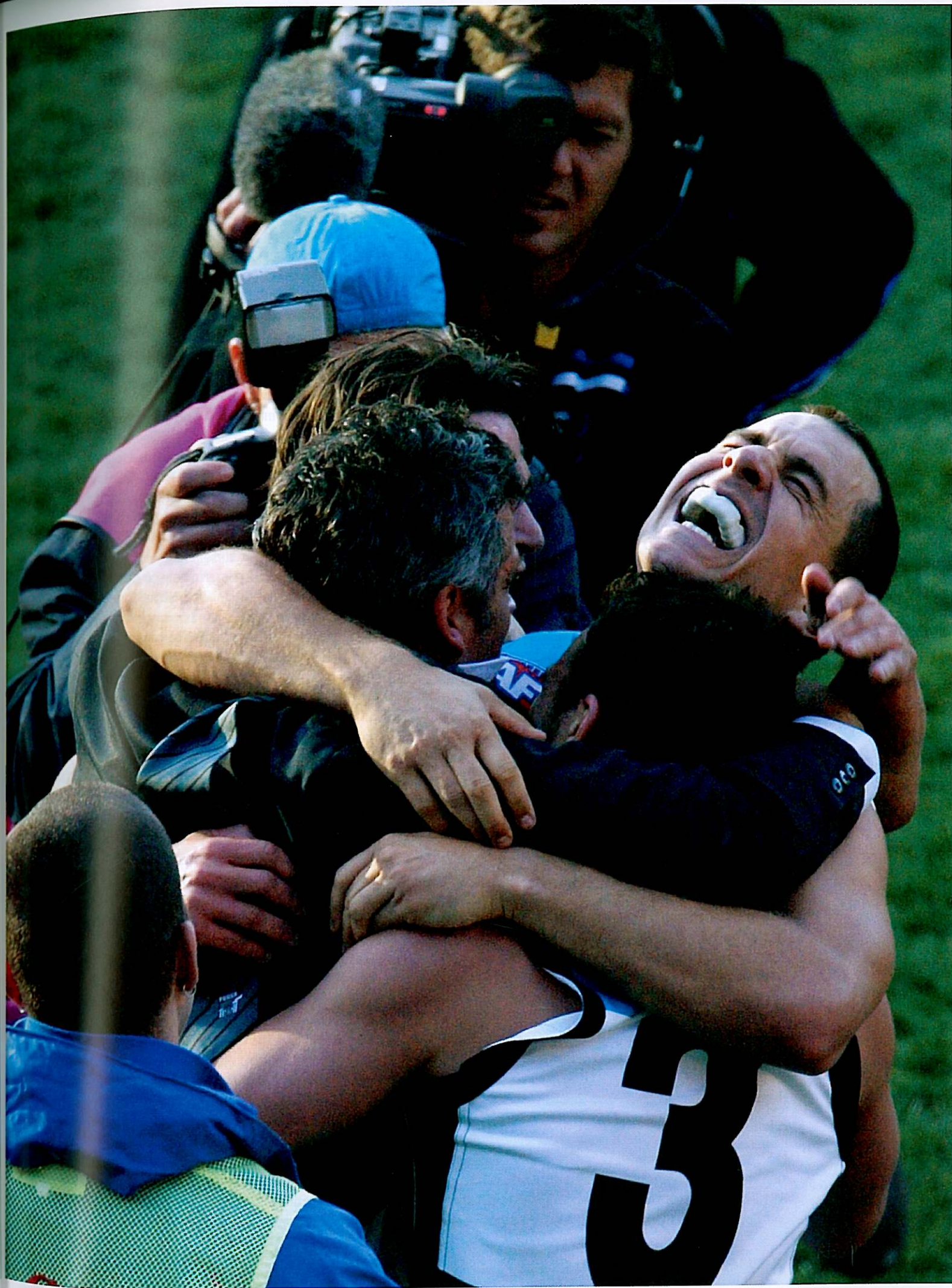
In 2004 fans had their first real taste of the benefits of innovation and digital technology in AFL broadcasting. Channel Nine used a revolutionary SkyCam to produce pictures from above the field of play while Network Ten introduced FlyCam – a sideline camera deployed during the finals.

FOX FOOTY Channel and Channel 9 launched AFL digital TV offerings, giving viewers the opportunity to be engaged with the game like never before.

Television

The broadcast scheduling format of AFL games during the 2004 season was consistent with recent years with the Nine Network, Network Ten and FOX FOOTY for the most part airing games on:

- The Nine Network on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons;
- Network Ten on Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings;
- FOX FOOTY Channel on Saturday afternoons and evenings and Sunday afternoons. Despite 2003 being the most watched season in history, viewer figures improved in 2004.





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General Manager's Report

Ben Buckley

BROADCASTING, STRATEGY AND MAJOR PROJECTS



The cumulative total of average weekly free-to-air viewers grew by almost three per cent to almost four million viewers per week. Season 2004 was the most watched season, eclipsing the record set in 2003.

In addition, several hundred thousand more viewers watched AFL matches on FOX FOOTY Channel due to the fact that it was available as part of the basic subscription TV package in 2004.



The six most watched premiership season matches in the five mainland capital cities on Network Ten and the Nine Network in 2004 involved six clubs from four different states.

- Brisbane Lions v Collingwood (average of 1.254 million viewers);
- St Kilda v Brisbane Lions (1.126 millions viewers);
- Sydney Swans v Collingwood (973,000 viewers);
- Collingwood v Essendon (966,000 viewers);
- Brisbane Lions v Port Adelaide (965,000 viewers);
- Brisbane Lions v Sydney Swans (948,000 viewers).



Finals matches in the five mainland capital cities on Network Ten again attracted among the largest audiences for the year.

- Grand final: Port Adelaide v Brisbane Lions (average of 2.97 million viewers);
- Preliminary final: Brisbane Lions v Geelong (1.67 million viewers);
- Preliminary final: Port Adelaide v St Kilda (1.58 million viewers);
- Semi-final: St Kilda v Sydney Swans (1.19 million viewers);
- Elimination final: Brisbane Lions v St Kilda (1.16 million viewers).

NEWS LIMITED

Television events and major attractions

Network Ten continued to telecast each of the nine 2004 Toyota AFL Finals matches around Australia with most games being shown live into all Australian regional markets on the Southern Cross TV Network. Ten also broadcast the Brownlow Medal dinner.

The Nine Network telecast the Foster's International Rules Series from Ireland.

Network Ten telecast a one-hour delayed highlights program of the National Bank's 2004 AFL Draft while FOX FOOTY Channel nationally broadcast the Toyota AFL All-Australian awards and the National Bank's AFL Rising Star Award.

Regional television

Regional viewers saw more AFL matches on free-to-air television in 2004 than has been the case in previous years.

Regional viewers received an improved level of coverage in 2004 with AFL programming seen across Australia on WIN TV and affiliates throughout Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia, on Southern Cross TV and affiliates in

Victoria, SA, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and Northern Territory, and on Imparja throughout NT.

The one major change in 2004 was the securing of Network Ten's national games being broadcast into Canberra as opposed to always broadcasting Sydney games, as was the case previously.

This ensured a greater quality and spread of AFL games being broadcast into the nation's capital.

Some free-to-air TV highlights

- Total viewership was up 2.8 per cent across the five metropolitan markets in 2004.
- Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth showed the largest increases in television audience viewership in 2004.
- Viewership was up in four of the five timeslots with the largest increases being on Saturday nights (Network Ten games) and Friday nights and Sunday 1pm (Channel Nine) matches.
- Six teams from four states featured among the top six most watched premiership season games of 2004.
- For the second year in a row, Brisbane Lions v Collingwood on Easter Thursday was the most watched AFL match during the premiership season.
- Round six was the most watched premiership season round and most watch round ever with 4.72 million viewers.
- The 2004 Grand Final attracted an average audience of almost three million viewers in the five mainland capital cities, making it Australia's most watched sporting event of 2004.

Radio

AFL radio audiences topped one million listeners per week in 2004. The AFL's radio partners – Austereo, Southern Cross Broadcasting, ABC, DMG Radio, Geelong Broadcasters, NIRS and WorldAudio Limited – broadcast more AFL games around the country in 2004 than ever before.

As a result, afl.com.au also carried a greater spread of radio broadcasts in season 2004 than ever before.

Disappointingly, several games involving Victorian teams playing outside Victoria were not broadcast back into Melbourne. This issue has been raised with radio broadcasters and the AFL is assured that this situation will improve in 2005.

Some radio broadcasting highlights

- Extended rights deal with Radio2 (Sydney), which saw them broadcasting all Swans' home and away matches and six Lions' matches in 2004.
- Signed a deal with Melbourne's SEN to broadcast all AFL events. In 2004 SEN covered the Australian Football Hall of Fame, AFL All-Australian Awards, National Bank's AFL Rising Star Award and National Bank's AFL Draft.

- Wizard Home Loans Cup coverage on 3AW.
- Two Swans matches on Triple M in Sydney.
- Several more games into Perth and Canberra via NIRS.

AFL Films

In 2004, AFL Films continued to produce the AFL's weekly international TV highlights programs – one-hour and game-length programs that are seen in more than 130 countries.

The biggest gain was in the vast increase of games broadcast into Asia via ABC Asia-Pacific on a live or near-live basis.

AFL Films continued its management of the AFL's film library and the digitisation of that library. More than half of that project is complete. In association with the AFL, AFL Films handles all AFL footage requests and also produces various football videos for the AFL, its clubs and several third parties. It also produces motivational tapes, testimonials and player tributes.

AFL Photography

In 2004 the AFL and Getty Images signed a new agreement under which Getty Images will be retained as the AFL's official photographer until the end of 2006. As was the case in previous seasons, Getty Images provided the AFL with comprehensive photographic coverage which encapsulated all the action and highlights of the Wizard Home Loans Cup, the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, Toyota AFL Finals, Foster's International Rules Series and all key AFL events and attractions. Getty Images manages the AFL's portfolio of photographs and commercialises selected shots from this library.

MAJOR PROJECTS: Developing Markets – NT

In 2004, the AFL signed a formal agreement with the Northern Territory Government to promote Australian Football in the Territory. This was a significant agreement as it meant that premiership season matches would be played in all states and territories for the first time.

The three-year agreement (2004-2006), with funding support from the NT Government, includes the playing of one AFL premiership season match and one Wizard Home Loans Cup match in Darwin each year. The AFL Indigenous All-Stars match featuring the best indigenous players from around Australia is to be played in Darwin in 2005 and 2007.

Each of the premiership season matches will feature the Western Bulldogs, who will also have an annual community camp in the Territory, and will work with AFLNT on promotional activities.

Much of this promotional activity will include coaching and clinics as part of the AFL's Indigenous program.

The first AFL premiership match played in Darwin took place on Saturday, August 14, 2004, when Port Adelaide 23.9 (147) defeated the Western Bulldogs 9.7 (61) before 13,271 people. In 2005, the Western Bulldogs are fixtured to play Carlton on Saturday, June 18.

Stadium Redevelopment – Aurora Stadium

The AFL has agreed to contribute \$500,000 over two years (2005 and 2006) towards the overall \$8 million redevelopment of Aurora Stadium (formerly York Park) in Launceston. AFL Tasmania has agreed to make a once-off financial contribution of \$100,000.

This is part of a three-way agreement with AFL Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government under which the AFL has committed to play four premiership season matches and one Wizard Home Loans Cup match at the venue each year until 2010.

Highlights of the redevelopment include:

- Capacity of the venue to be increased to 23,000.
- Extension of the Gunns Grandstand. This includes an additional 1800 seats, coaching and media facilities and two new corporate boxes. Beneath the stand will be facilities for AFL Tasmania including offices, meeting rooms, gymnasium, toilets and canteen facilities.
- Demolition of the Southern Stand and extension of roofed South Terraces through that area.
- Complete colourbond finish to rear of all terrace-seating walls. This will improve spectator comfort by preventing the wind from blowing through and further improve the atmosphere at the venue.
- Installation of large video scoreboard together with ground audio improvement.

The examples in NT and Tasmania, and the ongoing relationship with the ACT Government in conjunction with the Kangaroos illustrate how the AFL is working effectively with governments for the benefit of our clubs, fans and the regions concerned.

Community Facilities Development Program

There is an ongoing program of AFL facilities improvement across the country, including regional and urban centres. The AFL has joined local and state governments and Cricket Australia in contributing funding to such projects.

In 2004, the AFL agreed to contribute funding to redevelop Robertson Oval in Wagga Wagga and towards a new facility at Blacktown Olympic Park in Sydney's Greater West, an area of huge potential growth for the AFL.

This is another example of how the AFL can work with other stakeholders to deliver positive outcomes for the game and the community.

In south-east Queensland, the AFL has been working towards being a key stakeholder in the redevelopment of Carrara Sporting Complex, the former home of the Brisbane Bears. This has the potential to become an elite sporting facility with the capacity to stage AFL matches.

The Gold Coast AFL community and AFL Queensland is keen to become involved.



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General Manager's Report Ben Buckley

BROADCASTING, STRATEGY AND MAJOR PROJECTS

AFL Club Elite Facilities Development

As part of the AFL's aim to ensure all clubs have a comparable standard of facilities, irrespective of their financial strength, preliminary work has been completed to improve facilities available to the Western Bulldogs, Melbourne, Carlton and the Kangaroos. This work will continue with high priority in 2005.

In 2004, the Western Bulldogs sourced funding from the Federal, Victorian and local governments to redevelop the Whitten Oval. In 2005, the AFL will work with the Western Bulldogs to ensure the redevelopment is a success.

In 2004, the AFL commenced a process to redevelop Optus Oval into an elite AFL club facility, expected to be shared by Carlton and the Kangaroos. The first part was concluded in 2004, with Carlton making the decision to move its home matches from Optus Oval to Telstra Dome (six matches per season) and the MCG (five matches per season).

Carlton members overwhelmingly agreed with this decision, which is a 10-year agreement between Carlton Football Club, Carlton Cricket and Football Social Club (the ground manager of Optus Oval), the AFL and Melbourne Stadiums Limited (the ground manager of Telstra Dome).

The last AFL game to be played at Optus Oval is likely to be the round nine, 2005 match against Melbourne. Optus Oval/Princes Park has been a competition ground since the first round of senior matches in 1897.

2005 AFL fixture

The development of each year's AFL Fixture is a challenging process, which takes three months to complete.

In 2004, the AFL worked closely with its key stakeholders in developing the fixture, delivering an equitable outcome taking into account the numerous constraints of the fixture development process.



FINAL SIREN:

Optus Oval, scene of this big grab by Carlton's Andrew Walker over Eagle Andrew Embley in 2004, will host its last AFL premiership season game during season 2005.

Highlights of the 2005 AFL fixture include:

- Playing premiership season matches in every Australian state and territory.
- Commencing the season at the Gabba for the first time (Brisbane Lions vs St Kilda on Easter Thursday).
- A more even spread of Friday night matches for AFL clubs including the creation of an additional Friday night slot in the split round and the scheduling of the Western Derby on Friday night for the first time.
- Maintaining the twice-a-year rivalries between the South Australian and Western Australian clubs and the traditional Carlton/Collingwood/Essendon blockbusters.
- An equitable financial and football draw.
- Meeting all contractual obligations to clubs, venues, broadcasters and governments.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects department also has responsibility for managing the strategic planning agenda across the AFL industry.

Andrew Catterall rejoined the team as Strategic Planner in mid-2004, and has been working across all AFL Departments, with the AFL Commission, the clubs and other stakeholders on a range of major strategy and policy initiatives.

The strategic planning process is built around a series of forums staged throughout the year involving club CEOs and presidents and the AFL Commission that are designed to stimulate debate and reach consensus on key issues.

The major topics in 2004, that will continue in 2005 include:

- **Objectives and key strategies to 2015:** What does the industry need to achieve over the next decade? What are the key strategies and investments we need to implement now to achieve future success?
- **Financial Strategy:** How should the AFL invest centrally generated funds and resources across clubs, players, fans, game development/community, the game itself, facilities and business development to achieve key strategic outcomes?
- **Club distribution/equalisation policy:** How should we distribute funds and resources to clubs to help improve profitability and reduce competitive disparity?
- **Growing the pie:** What are the major growth opportunities for the industry? What are the major opportunities to improve traditional revenues or capture new revenues for investment back into clubs, fans and game development?
- **NSW and Queensland:** How do we best continue to grow the game at grass roots and elite levels to ensure AFL has a strong share in these markets?
- **Club support:** The team has provided major business planning support for Melbourne, Richmond and the Western Bulldogs, and will continue to be available to advise clubs on major strategy and business issues.

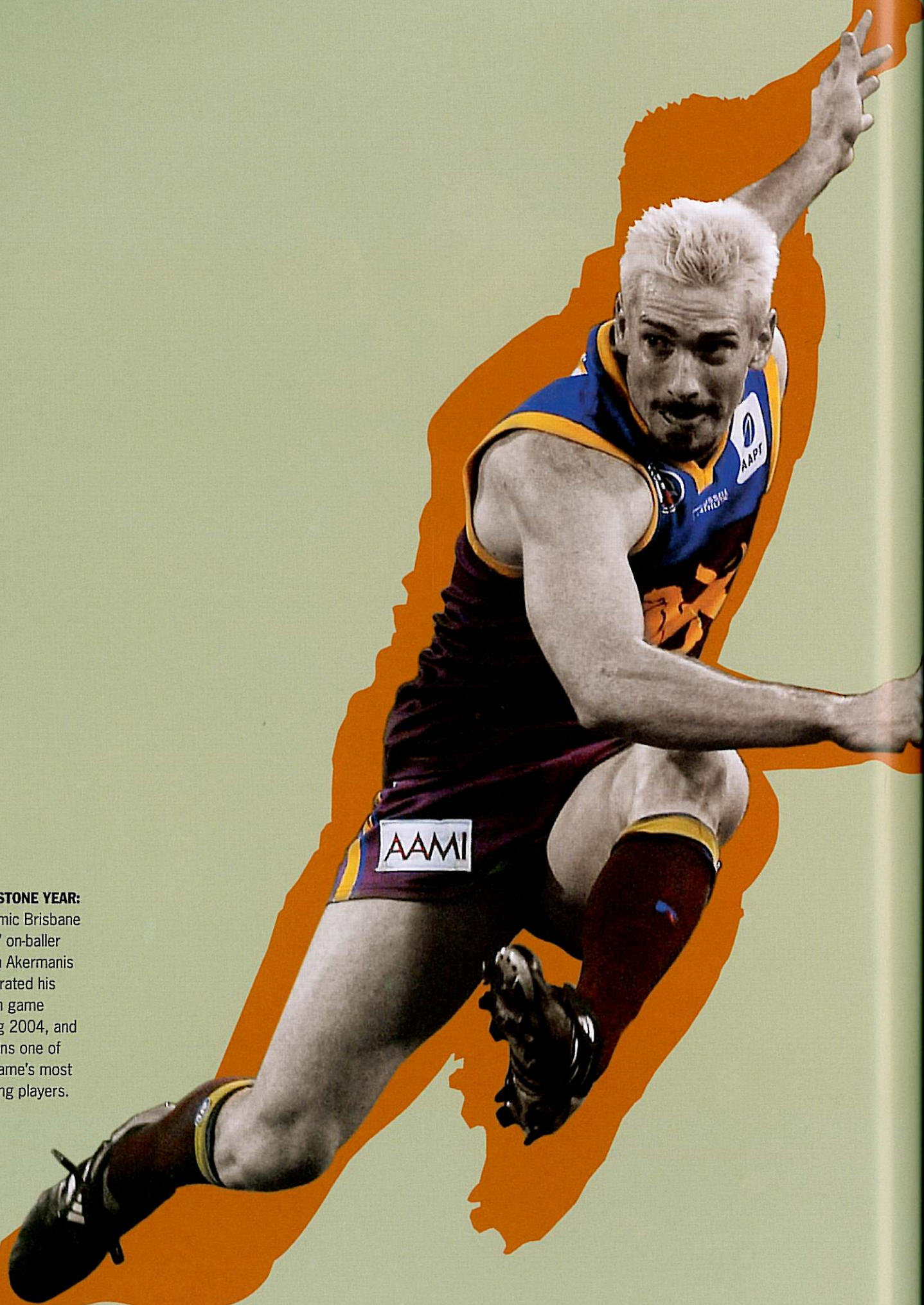
DEVELOPING RIVALRY:

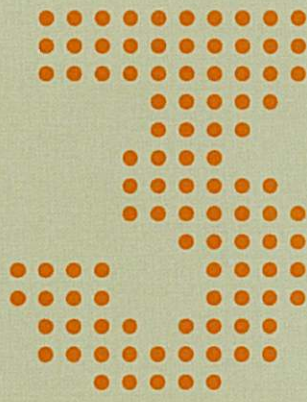
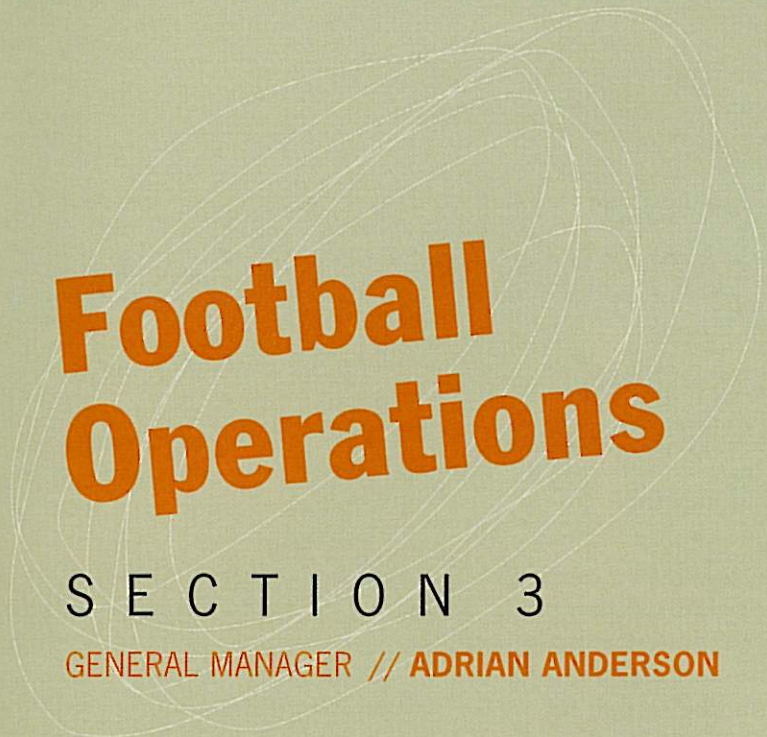
Brisbane Lions' forward Jonathan Brown matched up against St Kilda backman Matt Maguire during the nail-biting clash at Telstra Dome in round six. The Lions and Saints will open the 2005 premiership season at the Gabba.



MILESTONE YEAR:

Dynamic Brisbane Lions' on-baller Jason Akermanis celebrated his 200th game during 2004, and remains one of the game's most exciting players.





Football Operations

S E C T I O N 3

GENERAL MANAGER // **ADRIAN ANDERSON**

A new manager Adrian Anderson successfully took the reins of the AFL's Football Operations department from Andrew Demetriou in 2004. Highlights included the continued focus on improving the relationship between fans and the game, an extensive review and overhaul of the reporting and Tribunal system, re-evaluation of the Drug Code and intensive examination of the Laws of the Game and the application of those laws by umpires.



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General Manager's Report

Adrian Anderson

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

Building on past successes

The Football Operations department dealt with a number of major issues in 2004 with significant long term consequences for the game.

An extensive review of the reporting and Tribunal system, a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Drug Code and major challenges within umpiring, the Laws of the Game and the continued connection between the game and our fans were some of the major challenges.

In each area, this department was guided by the central principles of consultation and transparency.

All sections of the football community were given the chance to partake in this work and, crucially, to understand the decisions being taken.

AFL football is the most-closely examined sport in Australia and arguably the most scrutinised enterprise in Australia, considering that a full-time media contingent of more than 750 journalists report on the game.

The AFL's decisions' impact on all levels of football, down to the grass roots, and it is therefore pleasing to report the game continues to develop strongly through 2004.

James Hird

In April, 2004, the AFL Commission met to consider a matter referred to it by Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Demetriou, concerning comments made by Essendon captain, James Hird, following comments he made relating to AFL field umpire, Scott McLaren during an appearance on the Nine Network's *The Footy Show* on April 17.

The matter was referred to the AFL Commission under Rule 2.9 of the AFL Player Rules which states:

"The Commission may at any time and on such conditions as it thinks fit cancel or suspend the registration of a player where it is of the opinion that such Player has conducted himself in a manner unbecoming of an AFL player or likely to prejudice the reputation or interests of the AFL or to bring the game of football into disrepute. The Commission may also in its absolute discretion and without limiting the foregoing, refer any allegation of a breach of the Laws of Australian Football by a person to the Tribunal".

I also took action against Essendon and Hird under Rule 16.1 of the AFL Regulations relating to public comment on umpires. Hird appeared before the full AFL Commission as did Essendon Football Club Chief Executive Officer, Peter Jackson.

HALL MARK:

Sydney's leading goalkicker Barry Hall gets his handball away despite pressure from Hawthorn's Joel Smith.

The AFL Commission heard a lengthy submission from Hird and after considering the matter and a recommendation from Anderson, the Commission determined:

- To accept the unreserved apology tendered by Hird.
- To not cancel or suspend James Hird's registration, conditional upon:
 - a) Hird entering into a binding agreement within 28 days, consistent with matters discussed before the Commission in relation to assisting the AFL's umpiring programs for at least three years, including a forum and the AFL's umpires' mentor program;
 - b) Hird volunteering a payment of \$20,000 to the AFL within seven days; and
 - c) Substantial support from the Essendon Football Club for those umpiring programs.

In reaching the decision, the AFL Commission took into account the fact that Hird had given a substantial and long-term personal commitment to the promotion and development of umpiring. In a separate decision, Anderson determined that Essendon Football Club should be sanctioned \$5000 in relation to the comments about umpiring made by Hird.

Injury survey

The AFL's 12th successive annual injury survey showed that the 2003 season was the lowest year on record with respect to injury incidence, time missed through injury and the rate of injury recurrence. AFL clubs have continued to be more conservative in their injury management by keeping players out for longer with initial injuries, contributing to a continuing decrease in recurrence rates.

Medical officers believe that the lowering injury rates of recent years may be related to the annual investment made by the AFL in research projects, which have contributed to advances in injury prevention and/or management.

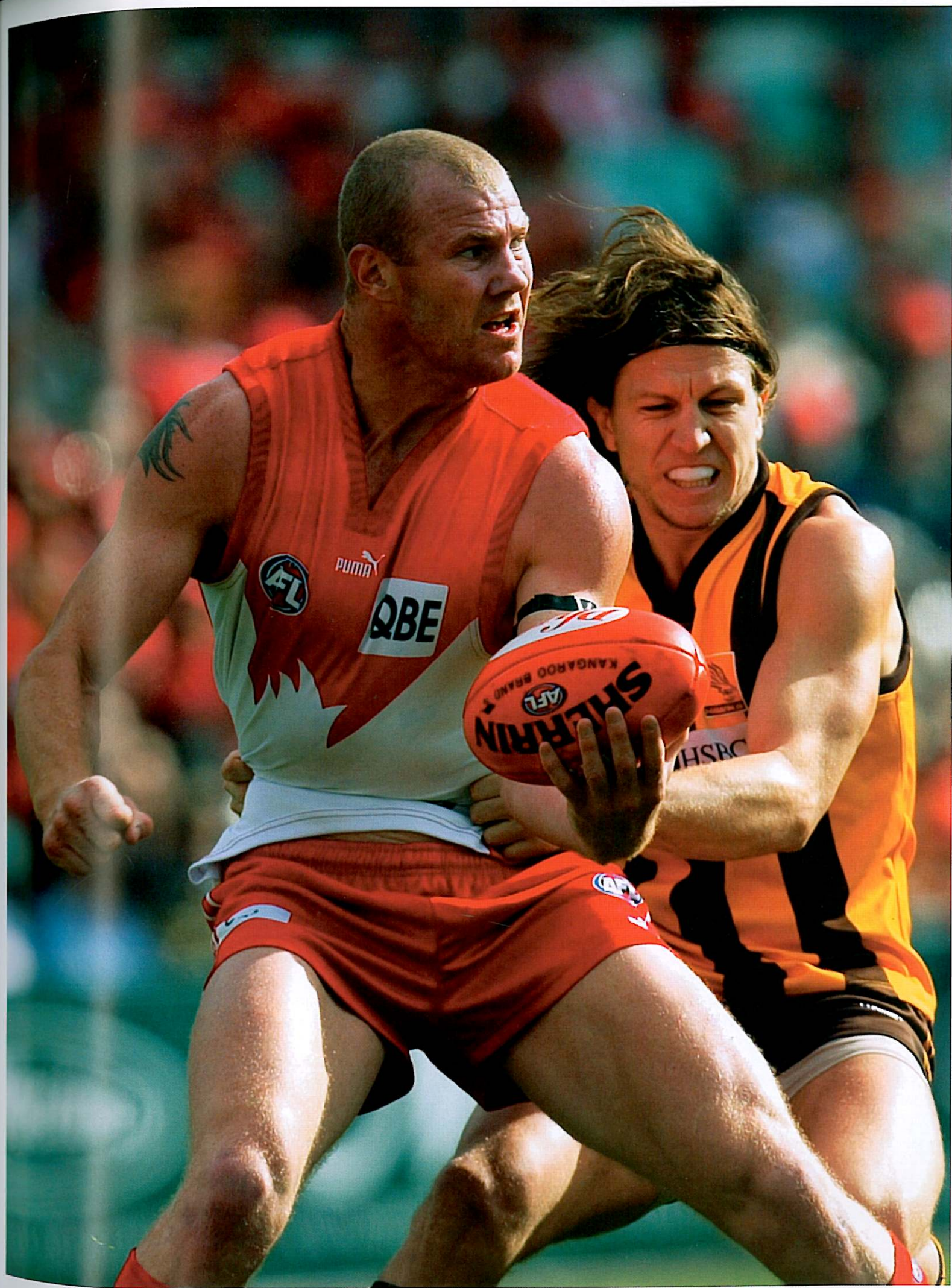
International Rules Series

Ireland regained the newly-named Cormac McAnallen trophy from Australia, winning both Foster's International Rules Series Test matches at Croke Park in Ireland in October.

The host nation's speed and skill, particularly in the first Test, was a decisive factor and, under new manager Pete McGrath, Ireland won its first series on home soil since 1998.

Richmond's Nathan Brown, vice-captain of the team, won the Jim Stynes Medal as Australia's best player.

At the end of the series, Australian coach Garry Lyon ended his four-year tenure as coach. Lyon presided over two series victories, including Australia's first-ever series win on home soil in 2003.





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General Manager's Report

Adrian Anderson

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

PCL injuries – ruck rules

The increasing numbers of posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) injuries in ruckmen over the last decade led the AFL to examine the Laws of the Game relating to ruck rules.

Figures from the latest injury survey showed that the ongoing cumulative effect of ruckmen suffering this injury meant approximately 25 to 30 per cent of AFL ruckmen have a history of PCL injuries.

The short-term effect on performance and long-term effect on knee health is of considerable concern.

Leading into the 2005 AFL premiership season, the AFL was still examining three options to reduce the injury rate; prohibiting contact with a raised knee, removal of the centre line and/or the introduction of a 10-metre circle.

Draft age rules

The AFL Commission resolved that the eligibility to be chosen in the National Bank's AFL Draft would be lifted by two months, with players having to turn 17 by April 30 to be drafted later in the same year.

This amended age means that the vast majority of players will have the opportunity to complete Year 12 before they enter the draft and start an AFL career in the following year, ensuring the importance of securing an education and planning for a future career outside football.

Players Myles Krakouer, Matthew Bate, Andrew Swallow, Shane Neaves, Thomas Redden, Lynden Dunn and Jordyn Burke were subsequently allowed to nominate in 2004, as each had finished their Year 12 schooling.

Bate and Dunn were subsequently chosen in the 2004 National Bank's AFL Draft.

Wizard Home Loans Cup

The 2004 Wizard Home Loans Cup, won by St Kilda, saw a first for the AFL when round one matches were played in all eight Australian states and territories during the same weekend.

A further five trial rules were implemented in the competition, to differentiate Wizard Home Loans Cup games from premiership season games. These were:

- Any player taking a mark or free kick within the goal square to be lined up from the middle of the goals for his shot at goal, rather than being placed on an angle from the centre of the goals.
- Any ball hitting the goal or behind posts during play that does not fully cross the goal or boundary line would be called play on.
- The boundary umpire to move in 10 metres from the boundary line to return the ball to play at all throw-ins.
- A 10-metre outer circle for ruckman to begin their contests for the centre bounce.
- The capacity for umpires to check video replays on whether or not a goal was a 'nine-point' goal.

SHARING EXPERIENCE:

Fremantle skipper Peter Bell (right) walks down the race with one of the game's most exciting young players and his Freo teammate Matthew Pavlich.

Retrospective award winners

Retrospective medals for leading goalkickers and premiership coaches from 1897 onwards were awarded in 2004. Family members for each deceased award-winner were invited to participate in the special ceremony conducted at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Premiership coach's medals were presented for premiership coaches up to 1949. For premiership coaches from 1950, the Jock McHale Medal was presented, in honour of the Collingwood coach who retired at the end of 1949. (the Jock McHale Medal has been presented on Grand Final Day since 2001). Leading goalkicker medals were presented for leading goalkickers up to 1954.

Research

The AFL continues to fund annual research worth more than \$200,000 in a bid to expand the knowledge base for all levels of the game. The AFL Research Board, recommended the following research projects be funded in 2004:

- Getting the Balance Right: Professionalism, Performance, Prudentialism and PlayStations in the Life of AFL Footballers (Dr Peter Kelly, Dr Chris Hickey – Deakin University, Geelong).
- Sleep Quality and Athletic Performance: The Effect of Interstate Air Travel (Dr Peter Eastwood – University of WA).
- Can We Reduce ACL Loading by Changing Technique in Landing and Cutting Manoeuvres (Dr David Lloyd – University of Western Australia).
- Injuries in Junior Football (Professor Caroline Finch – University of NSW).
- Performance Testing of Australian Football League Turfgrass Surfaces (Dr David Aldous – University of Melbourne).

Drug Code Work

The AFL committed to a complete review of its Drug Code in 2004, led by AFL Medical Officers Dr Peter Harcourt and Dr Harry Unglik (work on the Drug Code was continuing at the time of publication). All clubs were forwarded a discussion paper in May where the major points were:

- To upgrade testing to full screen testing in all match day and non-match day testing.
- To maintain a hardline approach to drug cheating.
- To consider the introduction of a step-by-step system where detection of substances of abuse – amphetamines (e.g. ecstasy), narcotics or cocaine – in non-match day testing would emphasise rehabilitation. Under these guidelines:
 - 1) First positive – treatment, education, counselling, additional testing, players to sign agreement;
 - 2) Second positive – all above options plus club involvement;
 - 3) Third positive – sanction (up to 12 matches);
 - 4) Fourth positive – sanction (up to one season).





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General Manager's Report Adrian Anderson

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

Total Player Payment Rules

The AFL Commission, through the Football Operations Department, actively polices the Total Player Payment (TPP) rules, strictly enforcing their operation.

The TPP rules are viewed as fundamental to the development and on-going success of the AFL and the long-term future of all 16 clubs. The AFL applied the following sanctions in 2004:

- The Brisbane Lions Football Club received a sanction of \$260,000 for 26 breaches involving failure to lodge documents within the required time frames.
- St Kilda Football Club received a sanction of \$50,000 for five breaches involving failure to lodge player contracts within the required time frames.
- The Western Bulldogs Football Club received a sanction of \$30,000 for failing to lodge details of Player Payments within the required time frames.
- The Melbourne Football Club received a sanction of \$30,000 for failing to lodge details of Player Payments within the required time frames.

Player Earnings

Gross payments to AFL players in 2004 totalled more than \$108 million across the 16 clubs, a 6.68 per cent increase on 2003.

A summary of the various allowances under the Total Player Payments system is outlined on the opposite page.

This shows that the average gross salary for players who appeared in AFL matches in 2004 was \$211,230 compared to \$201,924 in 2003.

AFL SportsReady

AFL SportsReady Ltd. celebrated 10 years of operations in November 2004. While the core business of the company has not changed – to provide assistance to young men and women seeking employment in the sports industry – there have been a number of significant developments to the operation.

AFL SportsReady now has offices in Perth, Adelaide, Darwin, Brisbane in addition to Melbourne. Significantly, the number of young indigenous people employed as trainees has grown from two in the first year of operation (1994) – to 81 in 2004. Indigenous youth represent approximately 20 per cent of the trainees.

AFL SportsReady, in association with the AFL Players' Association, is also managing the Next Goal Program.

In this program, senior AFL players coming towards the end of their playing careers have the opportunity to benefit from structured workplace training with a view to gaining experience and future employment.

This program has been a great success with two out of three participants being offered employment after their football career has finished.

Player Code of Conduct

AFL clubs are playing a more significant role in the management of the on-field behaviour of players (outside of reportable incidents) in issues particularly relating to sportsmanship, the treatment of fellow players and interaction with supporters.

The AFL has sought to move away from its disciplinary role in this area and has encouraged clubs and the players to be responsible for their actions.

In 2004, clubs dealt with a number of players under the Code of Conduct formulated between the AFL and the AFL Players' Association.

MCG redevelopment

The second stage of redevelopment work for the 2006 Commonwealth Games at the MCG was completed, with the opening of the new stand at the city end, continued work on the new members' stand and demolition of the old northern stand.

The completed work will provide world's-best facilities for all football supporters and AFL clubs through the new dressing room areas..

Umpiring

The AFL Umpiring Department placed a strong emphasis on clear communication with all sections of the football community in 2004, further increasing the level of information available to clubs and the public, via the media.

In a first for any major Australian professional sport, the AFL Umpiring Department made its decisional tape, a comprehensive explanation of the Laws of the Game with supporting video analysis, available to all media outlets reporting the game.

Journalists in all states were briefed as part of a national tour, joining the annual presentations made to each of the AFL clubs.

In addition, a weekly media conference was introduced to address umpiring issues arising from the previous weekend's round of matches.

These initiatives greatly assisted the understanding of umpiring through the 2004 season and AFL field umpires again performed with distinction.

Decision-making statistics matched the high standard achieved in 2003 (84.9 per cent correct in 2004 compared to 85 per cent in 2003) while figures indicated the most accurate bouncing ever recorded (87.6 per cent straight and 97 per cent contestable by both ruckmen).

A major review of scoring was conducted after a goal umpiring error in the round six St Kilda v Brisbane Lions match at Telstra Dome.

The key recommendation was to increase to the height of scoring posts at each AFL venue.

2004 AFL TOTAL PLAYER EARNINGS

	1999 \$	2000 \$	2001 \$	2002 \$	2003 \$	2004 \$	Movement % 2003-2004
GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS	71,985,000	80,951,208	88,957,912	97,701,770	101,843,018	108,645,462	6.68%
Deductions:							
Finals, Relocation & Living and other allowances	1,073,000	844,209	812,883	1,478,536	1,657,728	1,660,839	0.19%
Location & Cost of Living Allowances	838,000	1,112,500	1,178,125	1,390,625	1,484,375	1,406,450	-5.25%
Veterans' allowance 50% deduction	1,721,000	2,549,017	2,595,883	2,542,428	2,553,503	4,870,772	90.75%
Other deductions	-	646,799	703,427	837,984	237,500	1,089,720	362.62%
Total deductions	3,632,000	5,152,525	5,290,318	6,249,573	5,933,106	9,036,781	52.31%
PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS DEDUCTIONS	68,353,000	75,798,683	83,667,594	91,452,197	95,909,912	99,608,681	3.86%
Injury Allowance	5,688,000	3,500,608	4,266,984	3,850,200	3,531,000	4,314,200	22.18%
GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS INJURY ALLOWANCE	62,665,000	72,298,075	79,400,610	87,601,997	92,378,912	95,294,481	
TOTAL PLAYER PAYMENTS LIMIT	68,000,000	76,000,000	83,000,000	89,000,000	95,000,000	97,840,000	2.99%
Gross Player Payments Less Injury Allowance	62,665,000	72,298,075	79,400,610	87,601,997	92,378,912	95,294,481	
Margin/(Excess)	5,335,000	3,701,925	3,599,390	1,398,003	2,621,088	2,545,519	-2.88%
Additional Services Agreements (ASAs)	N/A	3,413,383	4,186,233	5,311,316	5,176,700	5,840,950	12.83%
Average Gross Player Earnings (including ASAs)	\$117,398	Listed \$126,996 Played \$140,295	Listed \$149,749 Played \$165,062	Listed \$167,229 Played \$194,732	Listed \$176,019 Played \$201,924	Listed \$184,656 Played \$211,230	

1990 - 2004 SUMMARY OF AFL PLAYER EARNINGS

	1990 Played	1991 Played	1992 Played	1993 Played	1994 Played	1995 Played	1996 Played	1997 Played	1998 Played	1999 Played	2000 Played	2001 Played	2002 Played	2003 Played	2004 Played
\$0 - \$60,000	442	448	409	373	337	307	260	178	152	121	87	71	51	51	35
\$60,001 - \$100,000	88	100	125	126	147	162	173	217	191	143	132	102	116	102	111
\$100,001 - \$200,000	8	17	19	33	45	91	126	159	209	249	237	219	194	184	188
\$200,001 - \$300,000	-	-	1	1	1	9	12	17	26	52	80	92	100	102	107
\$300,001 - \$400,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	5	7	22	34	36	47	57
\$400,001 - \$500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	14	20	31	24
\$500,001 - \$600,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	9	8	12
\$600,001 - \$700,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	4	4
\$700,001 - \$800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$800,001 +	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
TOTAL	538	565	554	533	530	569	573	576	583	576	568	539	529	530	542

NB: Details listed between 1990-1999 relate only to players who participated in at least one senior match during the season. Schedule above shows Total Player Earnings including ASA's.



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General Manager's Report

Adrian Anderson

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

Senior umpires Gavin Dore and Andrew Coates retired at the end of 2004 after outstanding careers. Dore umpired 302 matches, including the 1996 Grand Final while Coates umpired 281 including two Grand Finals and was All-Australian umpire in 1998. Appropriately, both were warmly received during a lap of honour on Grand Final day.

Ray Chamberlain, Adam Davis, Stefan Grun, Simon Meredith and Matt Stevic joined the senior panel in 2004 while Colin Rowston was delisted after three seasons on the list.

The 2004 Grand Final umpires were: Field – Mathew James, Brett Allen, Shane McInerney; boundary – Jonathon Creasey, Gordon Muir, Darren Wilson; goal – Anthony Black, Andrew Curtis.

Mathew James was rewarded with All-Australian selection, reflecting the efforts that have seen him umpire three of the last four Grand Finals.

Steve McBurney was appointed to officiate in his second International Rules Series, conducted in Ireland in October.

Rowan Sawers, who holds the record for the most number of games (410) and is the current AFL Field Umpires' Coach, was inducted into the Australian Football Hall Of Fame in May, recognising an outstanding career.

The AFL umpires received \$3.92 million in total payments in 2004, across the 32 field umpires, 38 boundary umpires, 34 goal umpires and two rookie umpires. These monies were broken down into salaries, promotional payments, welfare, bonus payments, AFLUA support and an airfare subsidy.

2004 milestones

Field	Boundary	Goal
300 games	200 games	200 games
Gavin Dore	Matt Vitiritti	Anthony Black
Darren Goldspink	Shane Jansen	
100 games	100 games	
Mathew James	Jamie Giles	
Corin Rowe	Mark Thompson	
Justin Schmitt	George Pampacos	
Michael Vozzo		

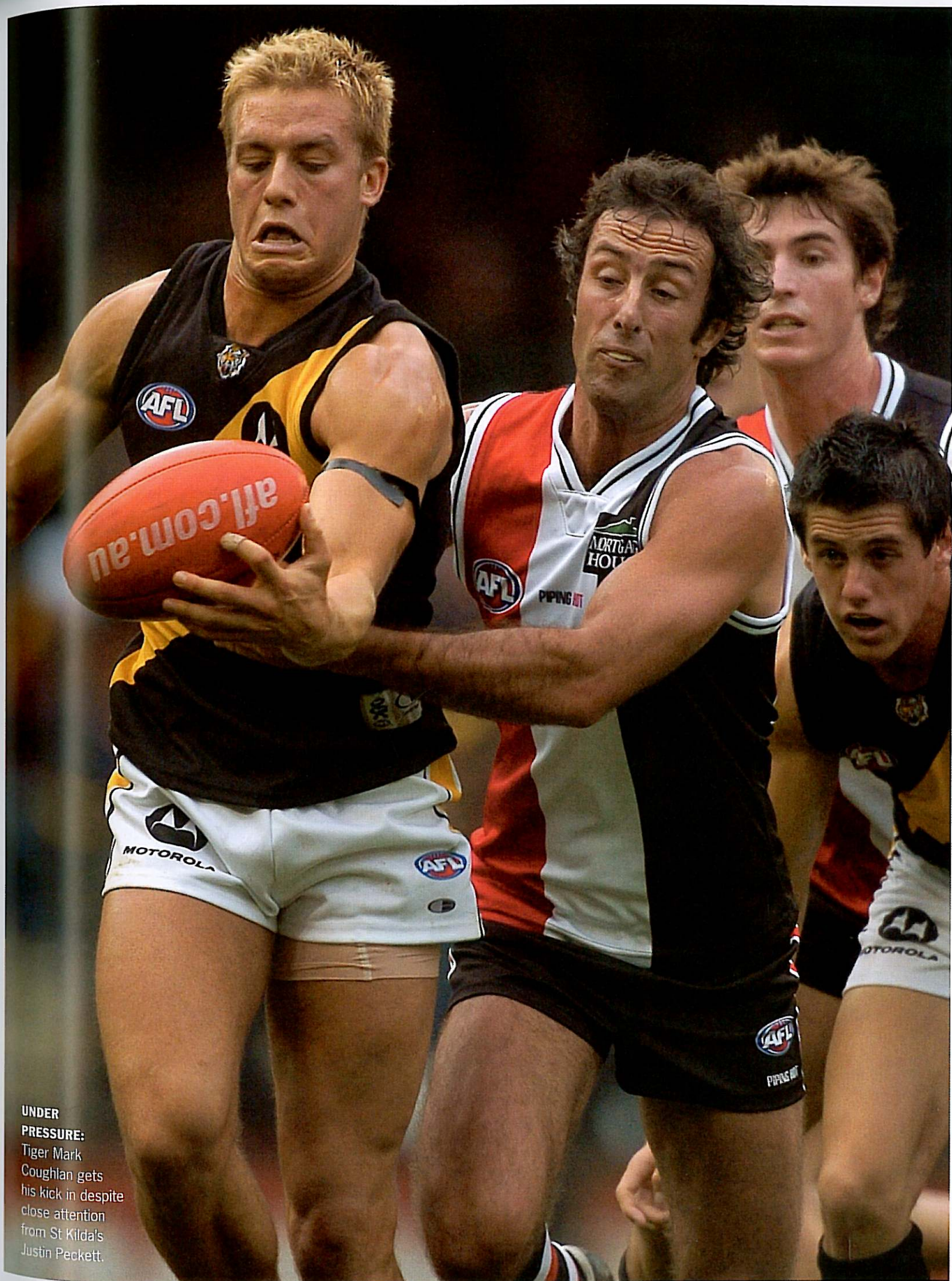
MEN IN CHARGE:

Grand Final day is an equalling big thrill for the umpires charged with the responsibility of officiating the game (Brett Allen leads the umpires on to the MCG for the 2004 Grand Final).



AFL FIELD UMPIRES' SENIOR PANEL 2004

NAME	2004	FINALS	TOTAL
Brett Allen	26	28	278
Michael Avon	17	1	87
Ray Chamberlain	5	0	5
Andrew Coates	13	20	281
Adam Davis	14	0	14
Gavin Dore	7	20	302
Martin Ellis	21	6	164
Darren Goldspink	23	29	309
Stefan Grun	8	0	8
Matthew Head	18	0	66
Craig Hendrie	11	0	14
Mathew James	26	15	120
Scott Jeffrey	20	0	67
Hayden Kennedy	25	29	344
Dean Margetts	16	0	42
Stephen McBurney	22	11	189
Shane McInerney	26	6	174
Scott McLaren	26	20	227
Simon Meredith	15	0	15
Darren Morris	7	2	88
Kieron Nicholls	19	1	98
Mathew Nicholls	17	0	32
Brett Rosebury	21	2	76
Corin Rowe	25	5	109
Colin Rowston	10	0	33
Shaun Ryan	23	1	39
Justin Schmitt	21	1	109
Matt Stevic	14	0	14
Michael Vozzo	23	5	116
Stuart Wenn	18	2	150
Derek Woodcock	23	1	72



**UNDER
PRESSURE:**
Tiger Mark
Coughlan gets
his kick in despite
close attention
from St Kilda's
Justin Peckett.



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General Manager's Report

Adrian Anderson

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

AFL Tribunal

On the eve of the 2004 season, a significant change was made to the AFL judicial process with the appointment of Hall of Fame umpire Ian Robinson as the game's first Video Reports Officer. Robinson's role was to review all video footage of incidents forwarded to him and to decide if a report should be laid. Previously, this was the task of umpires officiating in a particular match.

The AFL Football Operations department comprehensively reviewed all aspects of the Tribunal system throughout the 2004 season, and also examined the on-field disciplinary systems in other sports, both locally and overseas.

In November, the AFL Commission approved a new structure designed to promote efficiency, transparency and certainty by the introduction of a publicly available table of offences. Under the recommendations accepted by the Commission;

1. Players would be able to accept a penalty without facing a tribunal hearing. This would not remove the player's right to a Tribunal hearing if he wished to contest a charge.
2. All reports, whether laid by an umpire (on-field), the Video Reports Officer, the AFL's Investigators or the AFL General Manager, Football Operations, would now be channelled through a match review panel. The panel will consist of three people, drawing from retired AFL players, umpires and coaches. The match review panel would review all reports and determine what penalty on an offence a player could accept. Its first Chairman is former Hawthorn coach Peter Schwab, with former Carlton

premiership player Andrew McKay and former Grand Final umpire Peter Carey as panel members.

3. A Chairman would control the Tribunal hearing, to be supported by a jury, which would include former players. The Chairman would control the procedure of any hearing while the jury would determine the guilt or innocence of the player. The jury would also decide the length of any suspension. The Chairman is David Jones, a retired Country Court judge, with John Hassett his deputy.
4. Victim players would no longer be required to attend and give evidence at Tribunal hearings. Victim players may only give evidence with the permission of the Tribunal Chairman.
5. Legal representation to be permitted at Tribunal and Appeals Board hearings.
6. The cost of Appeals Board hearings will be reduced but an appeal will be restricted to grounds of: a) an error in law; b) the decision was so unreasonable having regard to the evidence; c) the classification of the offence was manifestly excessive; or d) the sanction was manifestly excessive.
7. Melees and second and subsequent wrestling fines will be added to the list of penalties with set monetary penalties.
8. The rules regarding public comment on Tribunal decisions to be refined.

Almost all clubs supported significant change to the current system, and were overwhelmingly supportive of penalties to be offered before a Tribunal hearing.

MAGPIE SOARS:

Alan Didak's spectacular grab over Andrew Welsh was among the highlights of the Anzac Day clash between Collingwood and Essendon at the MCG in round five.



AFL Tribunal 2004

TRIBUNAL RESULTS 1986-2004

SEASON	NO. 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	-	53	46
1995	82	52	-	30	63
1996	126	80	-	46	63
1997	164	110	-	54	67
1998 #	154	100	-	37 (17)	73
1999	142	103	-	27 (11)	73
2000	200	132	-	39 (30)	67
2001	204	137	-	56 (11)	67
2002	158	92	-	47 (19)	58
2003	110	67	-	35 (8)	61
2004	187	132	-	40 (15)	71
AVERAGE	128	77	2	812 (16)	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.

2004 TYPES OF REPORTS

Striking	53
Engaging in a Melee	41
Wrestling	27
Engaging in Rough Play	15
Tripping	8
Making Contact with Umpire	6
Attempting to Strike	5
Charging	5
Misconduct headbutting	3
Kicking	2
Kneeing	2
Misconduct contact with leg	1
Misconduct contact with Runner	1
Misconduct contact with Doctor	1
Misconduct contact with foot	1
Misconduct contact with knee	1
Total	172

Does not include reports that have been withdrawn.

2004 AFL TRIBUNAL SUMMARY

TEAM	NO. OF CHARGES	VIDEO REPORTS	SUSPENDED	FINED	NOT SUSTAINED	WITHDRAWN
Adelaide	7	2	3 (7 matches)	1 (\$1500)	2	1
Brisbane Lions	21	12	10 (27 matches)	7 (\$24,200)	4	-
Carlton	12	3	1 (2 matches)	10 (\$29,000)	1	-
Collingwood	12	4	2 (6 matches)	9 (\$26,000)	1	-
Essendon	16	4	2 (2 matches)	10 (\$42,500)	1	3
Fremantle	8	1	-	5 (\$10,500)	2	1
Geelong	14	2	3 (5 matches)	5 (\$9500)	6	-
Hawthorn	26	5	9 (19 matches)	12 (\$42,600)	4	1
Kangaroos	6	4	3 (4 matches)	-	2	1
Melbourne	10	2	3 (3 matches)	3 (\$7400)	3	1
Port Adelaide	17	9	3 (4 matches)	6 (\$13,900)	7	1
Richmond	6	1	3 (7 matches)	2 (\$5200)	-	1
St Kilda	14	6	8 (16 matches)	4 (\$7100)	1	1
Sydney Swans	3	1	-	-	2	1
West Coast Eagles	6	1	2 (5 matches)	1 (\$1200)	2	1
Western Bulldogs	9	4	4 (7 matches)	1 (\$2500)	2	2
Totals	187	61	56 (114)	76 \$223,100	40	15

NB: Includes video reports, investigations and melee charges.

Tribunal members



Brian Collis



Shane Maguire



Richard Loveridge



Elaine Canty



Ian Hill



Emmett Dunne



Brian Le Brocq






Game Development

S E C T I O N 4

GENERAL MANAGER // **DAVID MATTHEWS**



The role of the AFL's Game Development department was clearly outlined in last year's Strategic Plan. With existing programs complemented by several new initiatives and increased emphasis on connecting all levels of the game, the Game Development department achieved some impressive results in 2004. David Matthews was appointed as the new General Manager, Game Development and carried on the fine work of Ross Smith.

**50****General Manager's
Report** David Matthews

GAME DEVELOPMENT

Players have key role in development

The AFL Strategic Plan (announced in December 2003) sought to better connect with all levels of Australian football – from AFL Auskick to the AFL competition.

In 2004 there is substantial evidence that the plan's aim is being reflected in the outcomes achieved by the AFL's Game Development department.

Highlights of 2004 included:

- Player appearances in the community increased by 792 per cent to more than 13,000 contact hours.
- Participation in Australian football increased by seven per cent to 516,043.



SPREADING GOSPEL:

Collingwood's Paul Licuria spends some time with a young Swans fan during the Magpies visit to Sydney as part of last year's community camps schedule.

- Total club team numbers at junior, youth and open level grew by 3.9 per cent to 11,171.
- The number of school teams increased by 2.6 per cent to 4722 teams.
- AFL Recreational Football was launched.
- AFL Community Camps reached more than 100,000 people at 16 regional locations.
- AFL Auskick Ambassador Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico conducted more than 40 major events for 21,000 children.
- AFL Youth Leadership Seminar series featuring Jason McCartney was launched. It reached 12,000 young people nationally.
- The AFL Club Management Program was launched and distributed to 2500 community clubs and 300 community leagues.
- Community umpiring numbers increased by 13 per cent.
- The AFL Umpire Mentoring Program was launched.
- Four per cent increase in coach accreditation.
- 16 per cent of AFL listed players are graduates of the AIS/AFL Academy.

AFL player appearances

Players are the AFL's best promotional assets. In 2004 players were more active in the community than ever before. The AFL, clubs and players worked together to plan more extensive and targeted work in the community.

A revised Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the AFL and AFL Players' Association provided for each player to undertake 21 half-days of promotional work – 15 for the player's club and six for the AFL.

The AFL's planning for the six half-days allocated time to the following segments:

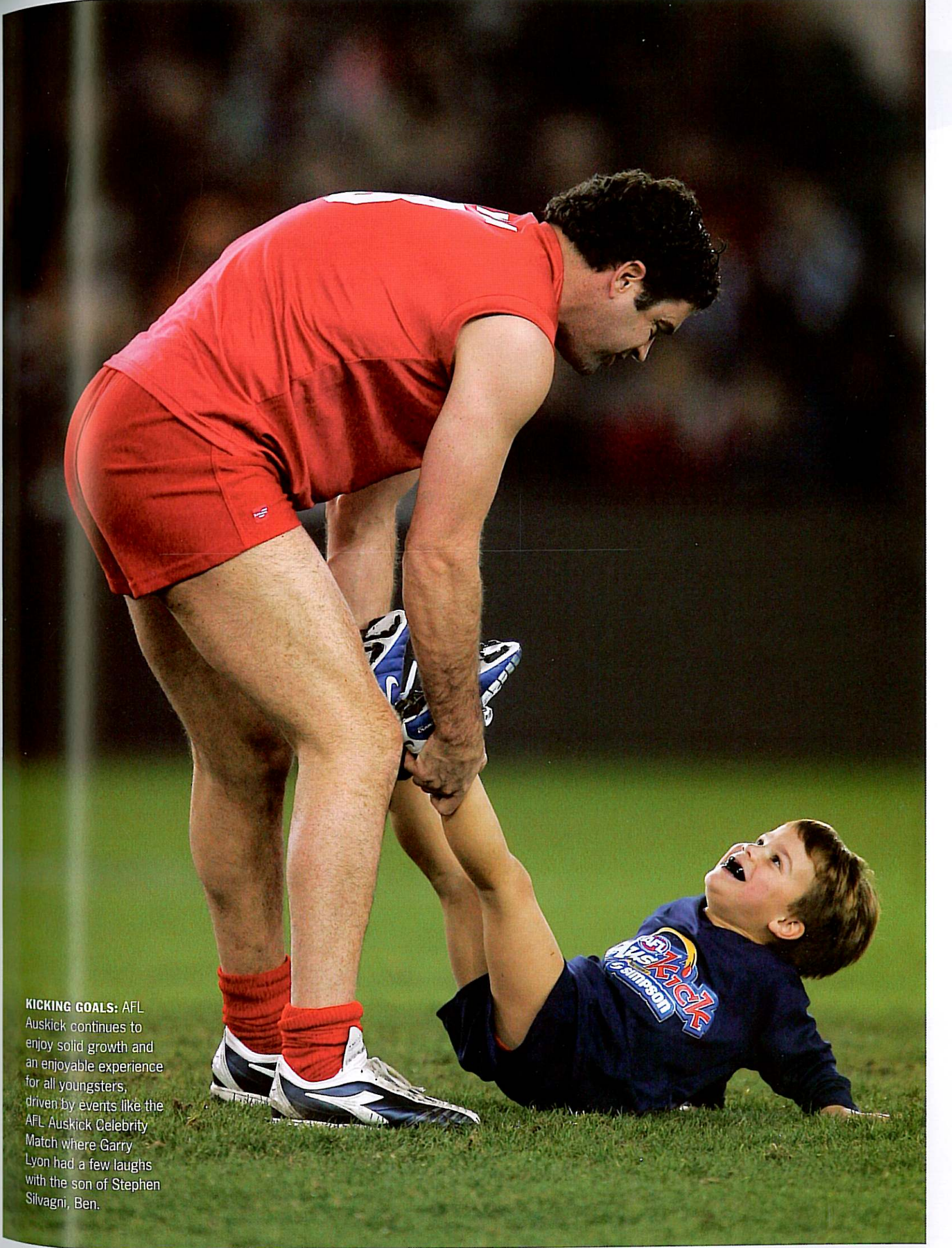
- AFL Auskick;
- Primary schools;
- Secondary schools;
- Junior clubs; and
- Country visits.

The joint planning undertaken by AFL clubs, players, state and regional staff, volunteers and teachers had an overwhelming result.

In 2004 players devoted more than 13,000 hours to AFL community work compared to 1400 hours in 2003.

This does not include a substantial increase in promotional work players performed for their clubs.

The AFL would like to formally record its appreciation for the efforts of AFL players in promoting the game to the broader community.



KICKING GOALS: AFL Auskick continues to enjoy solid growth and an enjoyable experience for all youngsters, driven by events like the AFL Auskick Celebrity Match where Garry Lyon had a few laughs with the son of Stephen Silvagni, Ben.

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General Manager's Report **David Matthews**

GAME DEVELOPMENT

PARTICIPATION

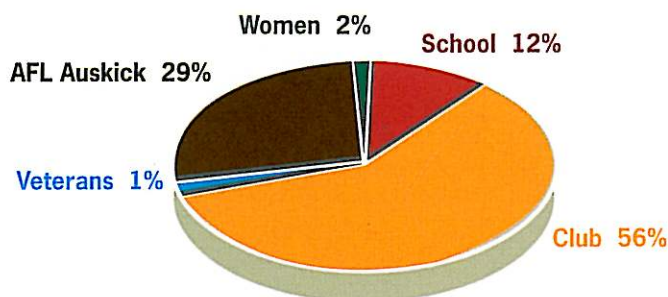
The AFL National Census (charts on pages 54-55) was again compiled by independent consultants, Street Ryan and Associates. In 2004 the Census recorded total participation in Australian Football of 516,043, a seven per cent increase on 2003 numbers.

The total participation figure records players registered in one or more categories – for example, a child who is registered in AFL Auskick and also plays junior club football. Taking account of the overlap between categories, the total number of individual players is 458,955.

The figure below segments these numbers by category and competition type (club, AFL Auskick, school, women and veterans).

Strong market growth has continued in the developing markets of NSW/ACT and Queensland but significant growth was also recorded in established markets, particularly Victoria and Western Australia.

The AFL is indebted to the thousands of volunteers whose extraordinary efforts sustain Australian football's massive participation base.



AFL Auskick

AFL Auskick, sponsored by Simpson, grew by 8.2 per cent nationally to 133,363 participants. Participation in this leading junior sports program has doubled in the past five years and has provided a platform from which community football can continue to thrive.

Key features of the 2004 AFL Auskick calendar of events were the AFL Auskick Celebrity Match (held at half-time of the round 17 clash between the Western Bulldogs and Collingwood at Telstra Dome in July) and the AFL Auskick Regional Roadshow hosted by Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico, which comprised more than 40 major events for an estimated 21,000 children.

The AFL and Simpson agreed to extend their three-year partnership into 2005.

The AFL has also received substantial funding from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) over the past three years under its targeted participation growth program. AFL Auskick growth surpassed the targets set under the ASC program.

Open-age competition

Incremental growth has been recorded in the open-age segment. This in part reflects the maturity of the established markets and the time lag that is inherent in the strategy for Queensland and NSW/ACT.

Across Australia total team numbers at junior, youth and open level increased by 3.9 per cent to 11,171.

Women's/country championships

The AFL actively supported the 2004 Women's AFL Championships and the 2004 Australian Country Championships.

The women's event held in Adelaide featured teams from Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Defence Force.

While the standard of play has improved quite considerably, Victoria again proved the team to beat and retained its title.

Much was learned about the issues facing women's football during these championships, which will be addressed by the AFL. The aim will be to improve the opportunities for women and girls in football.

The 2005 championships will be held in Victoria to coincide with the 25-year celebration of women's football in Victoria.

School football

The AFL and state bodies continued to work hard to support the participation of Australian football in primary and secondary schools. School team numbers increased by 28 per cent to 4642 teams.

The AFL has further enhanced the presence of Australian football in schools with the development of a number of curriculum resources. AFL Our National Game – Curriculum Learning Activities is aligned with state-specific curriculum outcomes and contains activities for early, middle and adolescent stages of learning across all key learning areas.

The AFL Heritage Teachers' Resource, developed in 2003, was re-branded and revised to provide both in-class and health and physical education lessons.

AFL Recreational Football

The development of AFL Recreational Football over the last two years culminated in its official launch in 2004. The game is designed for males and females of all ages and features modified rules.

SHOW YOUR COLOURS: Youngsters at this AFL Auskick Superclinic (opposite page) display a vast array of support for clubs from different states.





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General Manager's Report

David Matthews

GAME DEVELOPMENT

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS & PLAYERS IN AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL 2004		PARTICIPATION	PLAYERS
Club competitions	Junior	89,743	78,355
	Youth	96,318	96,318
	Open	82,550	82,550
	Total club	268,611	257,223
AFL Auskick		133,363	133,363
School competitions	Primary	63,222	37,084
	Secondary	38,717	19,155
	Total school	101,939	56,239
AFL Recreational Football		592	592
Veterans' competitions		4472	4472
Women's competitions		7066	7,066
Total participants		516,043	458,955

NORTHERN TERRITORY	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	90	2250	2144
Youth club	85	2125	2125
Open club	132	3300	3300
Total club	307	7675	7569
AFL Auskick		4218	4218
Primary school	59	1475	1241
Secondary school	62	1277	1277
Total school	121	2752	2518
Veterans	4	100	100
Women	20	340	340
Total	452	15,085	14,745

WESTERN AUSTRALIA	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	793	19,825	19,014
Youth club	579	14,475	14,475
Open club	482	12,050	12,050
Total club	1854	46,350	45,539
AFL Auskick		13,515	13,515
Primary school	379	9475	4197
Secondary school	356	8843	3014
Total school	731	18,318	7211
AFL Recreational Football	34	344	344
Veterans	47	1240	1240
Women	55	1355	1355
Total	2725	81,122	69,205

SOUTH AUSTRALIA	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	436	10,900	9608
Youth club	535	13,375	13,375
Open club	593	14,825	14,825
Total club	1564	39,100	37,808
AFL Auskick		12,915	12,915
Primary school	434	10,850	8762
Secondary school	184	3775	2771
Total school	618	14,625	11,533
Veterans	14	421	421
Women	5	133	133
Total	2201	67,194	62,810



AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB TEAMS, 2000 TO 2004



TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL, 2004

National figure: 516,043

QLD
57,687

SA
67,194

NSW/ACT
59,472

VIC
210,297

TAS
25,186

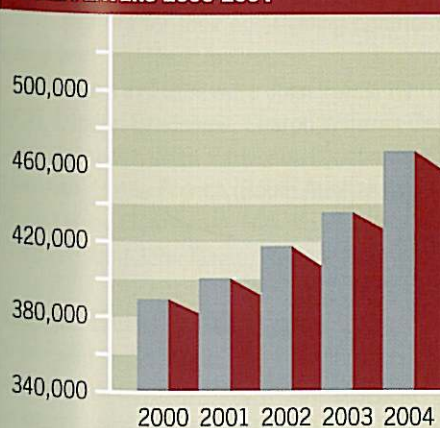
QUEENSLAND	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	574	8514	6458
Youth club	217	4413	4413
Open club	148	3700	3700
Total club	939	16,627	14,571
AFL Auskick		22,859	22,859
Primary school	751	8922	4908
Secondary school	453	6222	5114
Total school	1204	15,144	10,021
Veterans	13	325	325
Women	181	2732	2732
Total	2337	57,687	50,508

NSW/ACT	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	524	10,429	8459
Youth club	413	9180	9180
Open club	289	7225	7225
Total club	1226	26,834	24,864
AFL Auskick		27,318	27,318
Primary school	64	1600	451
Secondary school	99	2475	1309
Total school	163	4075	1760
Veterans	11	311	311
Women	40	934	934
Total	1440	59,472	55,187

VICTORIA	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	1395	34,875	30,066
Youth club	1970	49,250	49,250
Open club	1476	36,900	36,900
Total club	4841	121,025	116,216
AFL Auskick		46,202	46,202
Primary school	1080	27,000	15,107
Secondary school	521	13,025	3744
Total school	1601	40,025	18,851
AFL Recreational Football	16	248	248
Veterans	73	1825	1825
Women	39	972	972
Total	6570	210,297	184,313

TASMANIA	TEAMS	PARTICIPANTS	PLAYERS
Junior club	118	2950	2606
Youth club	140	3500	3500
Open club	182	4550	4550
Total club	440	11,000	10,656
AFL Auskick		6336	6336
Primary school	156	3900	2420
Secondary school	124	3100	1925
Total school	280	7000	4345
Veterans	10	250	250
Women	24	600	600
Total	754	25,186	22,187

TOTAL PLAYERS 2000-2004





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General Manager's Report

David Matthews

GAME DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In 2004 a Community Development unit was established within the AFL Game Development department to provide a stronger focus on community linkages that support clubs and leagues in particular.

Several major initiatives were finalised while others commenced – all have at their core an understanding of, and support for, community affiliates.

AFL Community Camps

In February, players and representatives of the 16 AFL clubs each visited a regional location (shown below).

More than 100,000 people experienced the camps at primary school or secondary school visits, superclinics, hospital/aged care visits, community forums and functions.

AFL COMMUNITY CAMPS SUMMARY			
SEGMENT	2003 TOTAL	2004 TOTAL	% CHANGE
Primary schools			
Number visited	210	308	47%
Estimated participants	45,000	54,203	20%
Secondary schools			
Number visited	40	73	83%
Estimated participants	13,000	13,950	7%
Superclinics			
Estimated participants	8400	8700	4%
Hospital/aged care			
Number visited	45	51	13%
Estimated people visited	3000	4465	49%
Community forums			
Numbers attended	2000	3450	73%
Official function			
Numbers attended	1500	4363	191%
Dollars raised for local footy	\$25,000	\$61,850	147%

AFL Club Management Program

The AFL has undertaken a significant project in recent years to research and develop a comprehensive set of resources designed to support the management and administration of community leagues and clubs. The Club Management Program has been finalised with kits being distributed to all 3000 community clubs and leagues around Australia.

The kits contained educational modules for club/league personnel and volunteers on the topics of risk management, planning, junior development, volunteer management, community partnerships and financial management.

All state development staff were provided with presenter kit CDs, which provide curriculum and presentation information on each of the modules within the Club Management Program to help facilitate the development of common best practice standards in all clubs and leagues, nationally.

Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into country football

In late 2003, the Victorian Government announced that the Regional Sub-Committee would conduct a review into football in country Victoria. The AFL, along with Football Victoria and the Victorian Country Football League welcomed the review and the prospect of greater State Government support to help sustain and grow country football.

All three organisations, along with numerous leagues, clubs and individuals, participated actively in public hearings designed to assist the Committee develop its recommendations.

There were 24 recommendations included in the final report that the State Government is now considering. Importantly, the recommendations do include specific measures to support both volunteer training and support; and facility maintenance and development – two outcomes that the AFL was specifically seeking.





AFL Volunteer Recognition

The process of awarding recognition of service certificates from the AFL to volunteers across Australia continued in 2004. Further, each year the AFL recognises volunteers/administrators for their outstanding contribution to the AFL game with AFL Merit Awards.

Recipients in 2004 were John Yates, Kym Austin (NSW/ACT); Lyndon Bradshaw, Sharon Williams (Northern Territory); John Hollander, Allan Parkinson (Queensland); Richard Newman, Hurtle French (South Australia); Warren Brewer, Doug Davey (Tasmania); Neil Wood, Laurence Plunkett (Victoria); and John Nagle, Saviour Borg (Western Australia).

International affiliation

In line with its Strategic Plan the AFL accepts responsibility for international development. The presence of Australian football in international markets continues to expand in size and organisation. The AFL works closely with the 11 international affiliates and their participation rates are increasing.

The AFL International Development Committee meets regularly to monitor progress and identify new initiatives to support further growth. The Committee comprises David Matthews (General Manager, AFL Game Development – chairman); Ed Biggs, (Community Development Manager AFL – convenor); Marty Alsford (independent); Brian Dixon (independent); Trevor Wright (British Australian Rules Football League – Europe region); Mark Wheeler (United States Australian Football League – Americas region); Troy Beard (Japan Australian Football Association – Asia/Africa region); Bernie Woodland (Samoa Australian Rules Football Association – Pacific region).

Two highlights on the international scene in 2004 included Essendon coach Kevin Sheedy's attendance at the USAFL Championships in Atlanta and St Kilda's visit to South Africa, which has stimulated further interest in a rapidly expanding region.

In August 2005 the second AFL International Cup will be held in Melbourne.

NO, IT'S YOURS:

Brisbane Lions captain Michael Voss visits a local school during the club's community camp early in 2004.



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General Manager's Report

David Matthews

GAME DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL BANK'S AFL RISING STARS PROGRAM

The National Bank's AFL Rising Stars Program comprises a number of sequential programs that identify and develop talent.

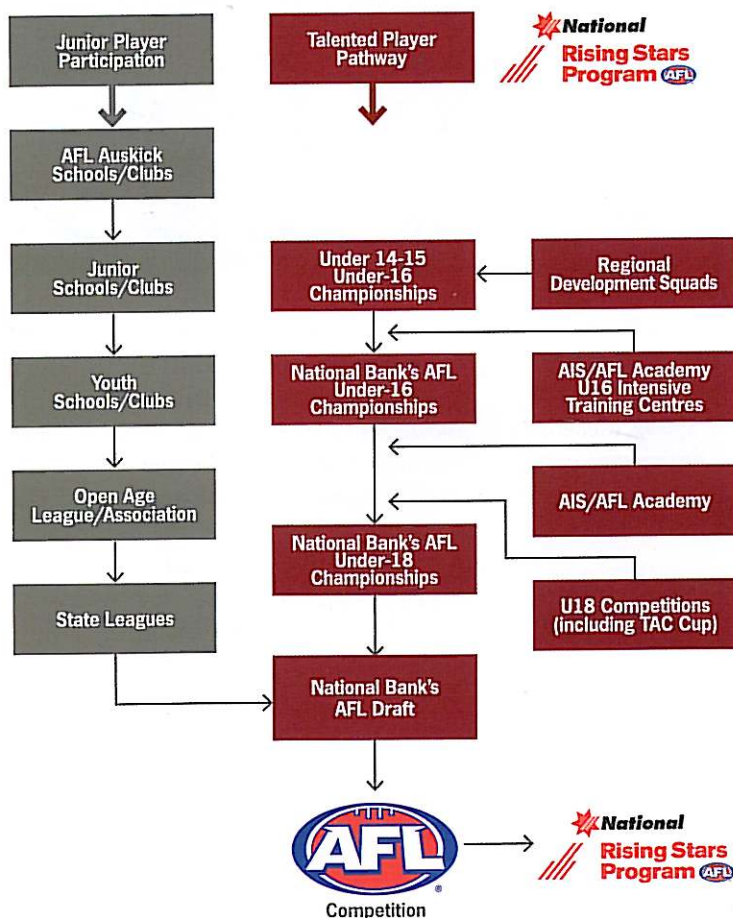
The success of the AFL's talent development is reflected in the geographic spread of players selected in the National Bank's AFL Draft and the increasing proportion of AFL-listed players that have graduated from the AIS/AFL Academy.

The AFL's increasing national footprint was reflected at the National Bank's AFL Draft in which five of the first six selections were from different states. AIS/AFL Academy graduates, after only seven intakes, make-up 16 per cent of currently listed AFL players.

AIS/AFL Academy

The game's best under-17 players continued on the road to AFL football when they competed in an International Rules Series against the Irish national youth team over the Easter period. The 12-day tour closely replicated the intensity and demands expected of professional AFL footballers.

HOW THE NATIONAL BANK'S AFL PATHWAY PROGRAM WORKS



In the First Test at the Gabba, Ireland made a brilliant start and held on to beat Australia by 22 points. The host team rebounded to win the Second Test at the MCG on Easter Sunday by three points.

The series came down to a nail biting finish at the Fremantle Oval with Ireland winning the decider by two points.

Mitch Morton from WA was the winner of the Ron Barassi Medal for the best Australian player throughout the series. Recently listed AFL umpire Matt Stevic refereed the series.

During the year a second group of athletes was invited to join the Academy as part-time attendees. The athletes were nominated as either a tall/key position player or athletes from other sports.

Of those eight athletes, three were selected at the 2004 National Bank's AFL Draft – Tom Williams (Morningside, Queensland to the Bulldogs), Ivan Maric (Calder to Adelaide) and Jesse Wells (Burnie, Tasmania to Western Bulldogs).

Additionally Daniel Batson (North Ballarat Rebels) was rookie-listed by Carlton. These players, all over 195cms, benefited greatly from the Academy's accelerated tall player program.

Following the National Bank's AFL Under-16 Championships, the eighth intake into the AIS-AFL Academy was announced in August.

The 30 players will attend camps in September (Geelong), December (AIS) and January (Melbourne) prior to the International Rules Series in Ireland in March 2005.

National Bank's AFL Under-18 Championships

The National Bank's AFL Under-18 Championships were held in Melbourne from July 3-11. Victoria Metro defeated South Australia in a classic final to win the Division One title while Northern Territory won Division Two on percentage from Tasmania and NSW/ACT.

The Larke Medallist (best player in Division One) was Victoria Metro's Jesse W. Smith while Richard Tambling (Northern Territory) was named Harrison Medallist as the best player in Division Two.

National Bank's AFL Under-16 Championships

The National Bank's AFL Under-16 Championships were held in Adelaide from July 23-30. In Division One Western Australia defeated Victoria Country in a high standard final match to win the title, with Queensland taking out Division Two after completing its round robin matches undefeated.

Best and fairest winners in Division One Grae Grant and Leroy Jetta (both of Western Australia) were each awarded the Kevin Sheehan Medal.

Division Two saw Daniel Dzufer from Queensland, awarded the Alan McLean Medal after an outstanding series.



ELITE ON SHOW:
Australia's best
young footballers
were again on
show at the
National Bank's
AFL Under-18
Championships.

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General Manager's Report

David Matthews

GAME DEVELOPMENT

COACHING DEVELOPMENT

Quality coaching is a critical factor in the retention and development of young players.

The AFL has an ongoing commitment to coaching development through courses and accreditation processes. In 2004, the number of accredited coaches in Australian football increased by four per cent.

NUMBER OF COACHES ACCREDITED			
Level of accreditation	2003	2004	Change (%)
Level 1	4467	4591	3
Level 2	174	236	34
Level 3	8	22	175
Total	4649	4849	4

AFL High Performance Course (Level 3)

The AFL High Performance (Level 3) Coaching Course was conducted at the AIS in Canberra from September 28 to October 3. Coaches aspiring to elite/high performance levels participated in the course.

Each state and territory, except for Northern Territory, was represented in the course. The 20 candidates will complete the remaining course requirements and assessments in 2005.

AFL senior coaches Mark Williams (Port Adelaide) and Neil Craig (Adelaide), a number of AFL assistant coaches and AFL Coaching Ambassador, David Parkin, presented during the course, along with senior AIS performance analysis staff and experts from other fields.

The course overlapped with the National Bank's AFL Draft Camp. Some of the draft camp activities were incorporated into the course curriculum.

AFL/AFLPA Level 2 Course

The AFL, in conjunction with the AFLPA, conducted a level 2 Coaching Accreditation Course for 21 retired and experienced AFL players in January.

AFL Youth Coaching Course and Manual

The new AFL Youth Coaching Manual has been published. The manual was developed to support the AFL Level 1 Youth Coaching Accreditation Course, which was introduced this year, and as a resource for all coaches working with secondary school-aged players (13-17).

AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct

A new booklet, incorporating the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct and the newly developed administration procedures related to the code has been distributed to 15,000 accredited coaches and to AFL state and territory affiliates for distribution to affiliated leagues and clubs and to all new coaches attending courses in 2004.

AFL National Coaching Conference

The AFL's second National Coaching Conference was conducted at Telstra Dome from January 30 to February 1.

The conference was organised by the AFL Game Development department, in association with the Australian Football Coaches' Association (AFCA), to provide an opportunity for coaches at all levels to gain first hand access to the latest coaching methods and practices.

The conference attracted more than 250 participants ranging from AFL club personnel and state league coaches through to junior club and AFL Auskick coaches.

AFL Coaching Ambassadors

Former AFL senior coaches Stan Alves and David Parkin participated in most Level 2 courses around Australia, as well presenting at a number of other Game Development events, including the National Coaching Conference reaching approximately 3000 people.

UMPIRING DEVELOPMENT

The AFL's Umpiring Development plans were enhanced significantly in 2004.

Strategies assisted to achieve a national increase in umpiring recruitment of 13 per cent and in umpiring retention of 3.8 per cent.

The challenge to recruit and train more umpires is an annual challenge with considerable work still ahead in some regional and high participation growth areas.

James Hird

Essendon captain James Hird supported umpiring development in 2004. His initial contribution was focused on a communications strategy to support community umpire retention. He also presented on leadership to young umpires during the National Bank's AFL Under-18 Championships.

Both James Hird and the Essendon Football Club are working on specific strategies that will further support umpiring development in 2005.

Umpire Retention Initiatives Guide

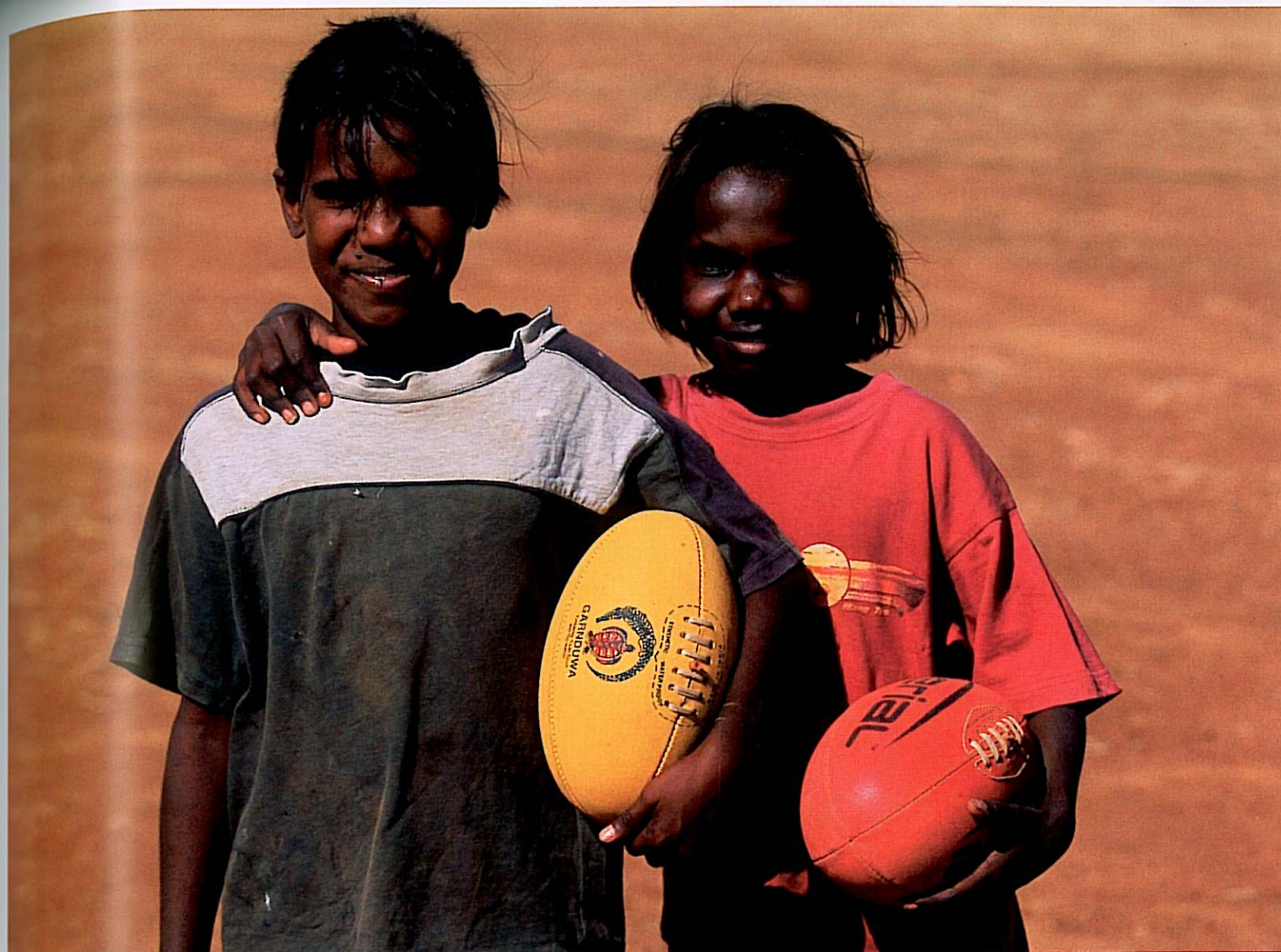
An Umpiring Retention Initiatives Guide was produced and distributed to all umpire coaches and umpire groups.

This handbook was developed to provide support and advice to umpires' groups and advisers on the important issues of recruitment and retention.

The guide is a 12-month resource, with suggestions and activities encompassing the off-season through to the end-of-season review.

It includes comments and suggestions on all parts of the program from training through feedback to social functions.

There are also templates to assist with communications to new and experienced umpires.



Umpire Mentoring program

The introduction of the AFL Umpire Mentoring Program was a significant step forward.

The program aims to use experienced umpires to mentor new and inexperienced umpires and therefore underpin education and development.

More than 200 mentors and 800 inexperienced umpires were inducted into this program nationally in 2004.

The mentoring program connects new and inexperienced umpires with an umpiring mentor to assist them with their early development.

The mentor program entitles the new and inexperienced umpire to wear a green coloured shirt to signify that they are learning their craft and being supported by a mentor.

The program is offered to all new umpires and is considered, along with the National Umpiring Accreditation scheme, as key components of the development pathway.

A comprehensive training manual and mentor benefits pack has been produced which was distributed nationally through a series of community seminars.

Graduation programs, attended by more than 200 umpires, parents and development staff, were held in Perth and Melbourne. In 2005 the development of umpire coaches will be a focal point in the drive to improve umpire retention rates.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS AND EVENTS AFL KickStart

The AFL continued to expand its work with indigenous people and communities in 2004. The cornerstone of the AFL indigenous strategy is AFL KickStart which utilises football as a vehicle to promote healthy lifestyles.

AFL KickStart has traditionally been very effective in northern and remote parts of Australia but increasingly, under Michael Long's leadership, its effects are extending to metropolitan and regional Australia.

Derek Kickett's appointment as an AFL KickStart Development Officer working with Football Victoria produced some outstanding results in 2004.

AFL KickStart was supported by the Australian Sports Commission, ATSIC and Rio Tinto in 2004.

During 2004 a meeting was held with Senator Amanda Vanstone and Senator Rod Kemp to consider the far-reaching effects of AFL indigenous programs and events in producing outcomes for health and education in addition to sport.

The AFL is now in the process of establishing the AFL Indigenous Foundation to be chaired by Michael Long and with a charter to develop an integrated strategy for indigenous programs and events and importantly seek greater third-party funding to expand benefits further.

INDIGENOUS COMMITMENT:

The AFL's Kickstart program is continuing to deliver excellent results in remote areas of northern Australia and is being expanded nationally.



BRIGHT FUTURE:

2002 number one draft pick Brendon Goddard is one of the many exciting young players on St Kilda's list who helped the side finish among the finalists in 2004.



Commercial Operations

SECTION 5

GENERAL MANAGER // GILLON McLACHLAN

The Commercial Operations department was reorganised in 2004 to account for its role as the AFL's revenue driver. To this end, Ticketing joined the department, Marketing and Brand Management moved to Media and Communications and the AFL's broadcasting relationships moved to the new department of Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Events. With the focus on revenue, the department was able to report growth in each area of its responsibility, a reflection of the strength of the AFL – not just at the elite level, but in all parts of its reach. Every department reported historical revenue records.



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**General Manager's
Report** Gillon McLachlan

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

Partnerships key to the future

The strength of the AFL brand is clearly represented by its partnerships with so many of Australia's foremost brands including Toyota — the AFL's new naming rights partner — Coca-Cola, Carlton & United Breweries, Qantas, the National Bank, Simpson, Telstra and Tattersall's.

Each of these companies has either been with the AFL for a long period, or has renewed and extended their commitment to the AFL, thus affirming the strength of the competition and the game. There is now a heavy emphasis on partnership and joint-marketing and activation plans rather than strict contractual administration.

There were several examples during 2004 – in particular in the themed rounds and in Grand Final week when our corporate partners had the opportunity to leverage their partnership using AFL events. A good example was Network Ten's promotion of the Seriously Party at Melbourne's Southbank during Grand Final week. This inaugural event is expected to be a permanent part of Grand Final week entertainment.

Coca-Cola's support of the Grand Final After Match concert (at the Punt Road Oval) fitted with its national live 'n' loud series. The After Match concert, featuring Joe Camilleri, and Jimmy Barnes had a powerful football theme, with Port Adelaide presented to the crowd. The event drew a capacity crowd of 10,000 with more than 5000 turned away.

We also recognise the growth potential of events, when connected to significant parts of the AFL calendar. These events have been, and will continue to be, linked to themed rounds during the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, and more events will be developed around the Toyota AFL Finals Series.

Toyota was actively involved in the AFL's week of activity at Melbourne's Federation Square during Grand Final week, including the presence of a 'mobile' dealership in the square.

Myer was the sponsor of the Red Carpet arrivals at the Brownlow, an event broadcast by the Ten Network, as part of its Brownlow telecast. The growth of the Brownlow Medal Dinner, and its huge television audience again underlines the potential of key AFL events.

The AFL Consumer Products division also extended the potential of the AFL taking an active position in the business of club on-field apparel, eliminating wholesalers and assisting clubs

to grow their merchandising business without taking a capital risk. Three clubs – St Kilda, Fremantle and Kangaroos – worked with the AFL to develop this concept, with highly successful results. St Kilda increased its turnover 500 per cent.

The AFL is looking to extend the ownership model, and is investigating several options in which it will take operating risk in businesses closely connected with AFL products. Several models will be tested in future years. The AFL's strategic plan includes the search for new assets, without losing sight of our core business in the sports and entertainment industry.

An example is the development of the AFL Premiership Club. Capital investment in this premium part of the AFL Membership is expected to provide significant growth. All divisions of Commercial Operations are assessing the potential of their existing and future business with the thought of finding new assets, and accompanying revenue streams.

The introduction of a specific Ticketing department (managed by Sandra Thomas) to Commercial Operations is a natural extension of the role of the department as a revenue driver. The AFL is acutely aware of the importance of keeping the cost of attendance to affordable levels.

The Consumer Products division is also seeking opportunities, and in 2004 launched sub-brands in several segments, including AFL For Her (apparel for female fans), Mascot Manor (a new set of club mascots, leading to publications, comics, and licensing opportunities), the First 18 range (a retro set of apparel) and Play On (a sports range for men).

The AFL Record maintained its position as Australia's leading sports magazine, and achieved record advertising sales revenue, up 31 per cent on the 2003 record.

Corporate Partners

The AFL unveiled a significant new premiership partnership with Toyota and continued to strengthen and cultivate a portfolio of outstanding corporate relationships. The AFL is delighted to be associated with such leaders in Australian industry as:

- Toyota
- Carlton and United Beverages
- Coca-Cola
- Tatts TipStar
- National Australia Bank
- Simpson
- Telstra
- Wizard Home Loans
- Qantas
- Kellogg's
- InterContinental Hotels Group
- Reebok

ON BOARD:

The Kangaroos (Glenn Archer is pictured with Adam Simpson, left and David Hale) were one of three clubs to work with the AFL on a new merchandising plan, which netted excellent results.





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General Manager's Report

Gillon McLachlan

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS



Toyota

2004 was the first year of Toyota's title sponsorship of the AFL premiership season, AFL Finals Series and Grand Final, Toyota Goal and Mark of the Year, the Brownlow Medal function and key foundation events in support of Grand Final Week.

Toyota's sponsorship rapidly gained record levels of awareness among the Australian public.

At the same time Toyota continued to develop an emotional connection with football fans across the country with innovative venue promotions, signage and the inaugural Premiership Cup Tour of country Victoria.

During the second half of the year, Toyota inspired fans with the launch of its 'Great Moments' television advertising campaign, paying tribute to the players and defining AFL moments.



Carlton and United Beverages (CUB)

Football and CUB share a unique history dating back 147 years. Ever since the first recorded Australian Football match was played in 1858, football and CUB have become synonymous.

In 2004 CUB redefined its ongoing association with the AFL through an expanding portfolio of alcoholic beverages including popular brands of beer, wine, spirits, pre-mixed spirits and cider.

Carlton Draught is the 'official beer of the AFL' reinforcing a relationship that spans more than 100 years.

Carlton Draught's involvement with the code is widespread. It sponsors 14 of the 16 AFL clubs plus a variety of individual players and is also involved in the sport at a grass roots level through its support of country and regional leagues.



Coca-Cola

2004 was a pivotal year for Coca-Cola, renewing its sponsorship of the AFL from 2005 and at the same time, renegotiating venue pourage rights and its association with 15 AFL clubs for the next four years.

Supporting a range of activities from grass roots through to major sponsorships of national teams, Coca-Cola are leading supporters of sporting and activity based programs.

In the future, Coca Cola is committed to strengthening its connection with fans across Australia via naming rights to the All Australian Team and Grand Final Week post match concert.

Tatts TipStar

Tatts TipStar is the official footy tipping competition of the Australian Football League. Governed by Tattersall's and Footy Consortium Pty Ltd, TipStar offers a range of weekly and end of season football tipping options.

As Australia's richest footy tipping competition with an end of season cash prize of \$150,000, TipStar attracted more than 23,000 registered players during 2004.

National Australia Bank

The National Australia Bank joined the AFL in 2003 to develop the next generation of champions and to support the development of grass roots football across Australia.

The National is the principal partner of the National Bank's AFL Rising Stars Program, which provides recognition and a clearly identifiable direction for a player's career, and comprises the following elements:

- The National Bank's AFL Rising Star
- The National Bank's AFL Draft
- The National Bank's AFL Draft Camp
- The National Bank's AFL Under-18 Championships
- AIS-AFL Academy
- The National Bank's AFL Under-16 Championships

The National has introduced a number of important additional initiatives to support this partnership – the National Bank's Rising Star Club Recognition Awards which recognise the contribution that local football clubs make to the development of young players, the National Bank's AFL Draftee Development Awards which recognise individual volunteers who have helped young players progress to the elite AFL level and the National Staff Volunteer Program, which encourages National employees to volunteer their time and expertise to assist local football clubs.

Simpson

In 2004 Simpson extended its association with the AFL as principal sponsor of the AFL Auskick junior development program.

The program which enables junior players to participate in a coached outdoor environment has helped the AFL grow its AFL Auskick participation to record levels in excess of 133,000, increase the number of AFL Auskick centres and recognise the valuable role of volunteers in football. Simpson is Australia's leading manufacturer of whitegood appliances.

Wizard Home Loans

Wizard Home Loans became the naming rights sponsor of the Wizard Home Loans Cup in 2002. In 2004, Wizard increased their involvement with the AFL by sponsoring the umpires for the premiership season.

Wizard Home Loans is a competitive, innovative and passionate company, now with over 200 branches and a strong history of sporting sponsorship. The pre-season competition shares these synergies with the Wizard brand making the sponsorship a natural fit.

Qantas

The AFL and Qantas have been partners since 2001, when Qantas became the official airline of the AFL. Now in the fourth year of alliance, Qantas assists both teams and officials with all their domestic travel requirements.