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THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS MET AT AURORA STADIUM, LAUNCESTON, ON WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2013

INQUIRY INTO GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF AUSTRALIAN RULES COMMUNITY FOOTBALL IN TASMANIA

Mr GRAEME WILKINSON WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED

CHAIR - Graeme, this is a public hearing. It is recorded and becomes part of the *Hansard* public record. While you are in here, you have parliamentary privilege. It applies to any of the evidence and information you provide to this committee. Once you walk out of this environment, parliamentary privilege does not apply. If at any stage you feel that the evidence you give is evidence you would like to give in camera, all you have to do is ask and the committee will consider that.

Mr WILKINSON - My reason for coming today has been my longstanding concern with what is occurring with football. It is allied to concerns of our society because I believe that whilst football is an important matter and what we are talking about primarily is football and the funding that has been given to a governing body, I am interested to suggest that we look a little further out of the boundaries of football and sport generally, as to what can be done with the funding rather than it being given to a body that is just for the elite part of the sport. I believe we have a fantastic opportunity here and I congratulate you gentlemen and the parliamentary people responsible for putting this inquiry into place because I believe we can utilise the funding far better than how it is being given and administered in its present form.

The AFL made a decision - in one of my areas of concern - about the draft fee payments, which were given to clubs that produced players who were taken into the AFL. At that time, years ago, funding was provided by the AFL back to the clubs where the boys came from, to help with the running of their football club and to administer that money as they saw fit. The AFL used the phrasing when they took that funding back off the clubs - 'we can use it better'. Well I believe we can better use the government funding we are given now, for the benefit of our society and for the benefit of football at the grassroots level, underneath the elite. That really is the crux of what I am about.

There are many instances where the focus on the elite has been to the detriment of grassroots and community football. If you want to question me about them please do so. For instance, there are no grants that were previously given by the AFL to grassroots football. The NTFA, the SFL and the NTFL received grants up to \$30 000 some years back and that has been reduced to nothing.

Mr GUTWEIN - For example, Jesse Crichton, who just spent a number of years playing in Perth with the Fremantle Dockers would have come from - I think it was either the Branhholm or the Winnaleah Football Club - a couple of years ago. Would that club have received anything for Jesse Crichton? He would have taken a step up through the

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state league to get there but would there have been any flow on coming back, to the best of your knowledge, to that league or to those clubs?

Mr WILKINSON - To the best of my knowledge they get nothing. In today's running, no money goes back other than to the level one - the statewide league now - where a player is drafted. To my knowledge, and I may be incorrect but I have tried to pursue this to the best of my ability, players drafted from lower than the level one statewide league cannot be drafted into the AFL. They have to go up and be signed, to be on level one, before they are drafted by the AFL.

You have the instance where a boy is nurtured, and brought through and supported by a grassroots football club - by the volunteer people. Ladies and fellows working their backsides off selling raffle tickets and working in kiosks and trying to create an environment to bring a kid through in sport. We are talking about football - they bring them through to the age of 16, 15, 14, 13 from the age of 8 or whatever it may be, and they get nothing. This is a disgrace and it is one of the reasons, I believe, why voluntary people - the heart and soul of football clubs, and the heart and soul of the communities where these football clubs are throughout the state - are walking away in numbers. Part of it could be - 'Why am I busting my heart and soul and finding we get nothing for this service'. If a kid comes through who becomes an elite player, we get nothing. It's not fair, not proper.

CHAIR - So the money is going back into AFL Tasmania, and you are saying AFL Tasmania is not dispersing that money back into grass-roots football. Is that what you're saying, Graeme?

Mr WILKINSON - That's exactly what I'm saying. We had four players drafted from Tasmania to the AFL this year, including two boys from Launceston, Jackson Thurlow and Sam Lonergan. When I asked Malcolm Atkins, who is involved heavily in the Launceston Football Club, what they received at level 1, even with a drafted player, the maximum I was told - and I hope I'm correct - was \$15 000 or it could be \$5 000, depending upon the age of the player who is drafted.

If that is the case, there were four players drafted. I rang a gentleman, Scott Taylor, at the AFL in Victoria, to find out specifically what the payments were paid down to the club where a boy is drafted from and he couldn't give me that information from a state point of view, but he disclosed to me that there were four players drafted and the amount of money was \$240 000 given to AFL Tasmania for those four drafted players.

So if we say \$15 000 was the maximum for four players, paid out to even the clubs where they were drafted from at level 1, that is \$60 000, \$180 000 immediately goes into the coffers of AFL Tasmania because they believe they can use it better.

CHAIR - Graeme, the state government currently is committed to \$2.5 million funding over a five-year period, and that commenced in 2011. So it is \$500 000 annually, and paid at two stages through the year, \$350 000 at the first stage and \$150 000 in the latter part of the year. It is paid to AFL Tasmania for 'partnerships that drive significant economic and social returns to the community and provides a direct benefit to football at all levels in Tasmania and increased support for grass-roots football'. That's what the state government money is paid to AFL Tasmania for. What you're saying is that you can't

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identify where too much of that funding has gone back into grass-roots football across the state.

Mr WILKINSON - No, I can't. I believe AFL Tasmania will try to justify the funding that's given to them, and it's very substantial. Whilst you're quoting figures from the government, and I know that you're -

CHAIR - That's from Sport and Recreation, that is what they've said about the funding.

Mr WILKINSON - Okay. The AFL philosophy is to focus on the elite. They show scant respect, and continue to show scant respect, for the grass-roots area, other than their eliteness, for many years. You have letters there that I wrote in 2002, 2003, relaying a lot of the disappointments I had with what was happening with the area of particularly football.

I believe there's a bigger picture here and we must take this opportunity to look at options of how we can use the funding money better. The AFL has got an enormous amount of money accrued through their television deals of \$1.26 billion, plus all of the other sponsorship and funding that is given through their gate takings and everything else that they run. They are entitled to run that as an industry, not a sport. One of the disappointments I have is that a sport has become an industry and they have to focus on that. We are not going to change that.

This is a dictatorship. I call them a dictatorship because I have had instances where that has been relayed to me. When Scott Wade came to a meeting of the NTFL when I was a board member to answer questions that were put up by the clubs that were in the NTFL and the NTFA that were going to be incorporated into the second edition of the statewide league, those clubs of the NTFL board relayed to us that they had concerns about the introduction of the statewide league and their involvement and they had queries. Anyway Scott Wade was invited to come along specifically to answer those questions from the clubs on the night. The clubs attended with their presidents and delegates, and the board of NTFL. Scott Wade got up to address the meeting and in his opening statement was:

Gentlemen, I am here to tell you tonight that I will not be answering any questions related to the statewide league. It is in place and that is all there is to it.

All the members and the delegates jumped up and the president said, 'What the hell are we here for?'. And he said, 'Gentlemen, I am not going to answer any criticism. The statewide league will be put into place and that's all there is to it.' I jumped up and I said, 'That's not a democracy, Scott; that is a bloody dictatorship', and that is the problem we have with the administration of AFL Tasmania on the board of football, other than the grassroots area. We have to protect the grassroots area to become independent and able to run football for the benefit of the sport for the total community of Tasmania, not just for the elite level.

CHAIR - That is what our state funding is about. There are eight focus points on that funding. In other words when the state provides that money to AFL Tasmania there is a criterion there that AFL Tasmania are supposed to meet in order to get that money and

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the way they use that money. The eight criteria that have currently been set I understand are now probably being renegotiated by AFL Tasmania and there is some discussion around it. However, it is currently in place right at this moment. The areas they have to target are: participation programs, coach and official education/development, government's initiatives, communication, marketing and promotion, club development, inclusive participation, and ethics/harassment free sport. They are the eight criteria around which that funding is provided to AFL Tasmania. Are there any areas there that you believe the money is being focused towards, being spent on?

Mr WILKINSON - Participation is just one issue you have talked about. AFL Tasmania has deleted clubs by its statewide league and the amalgamation of teams to be in the statewide league. It proposed South Launceston and Prospect Sharks becoming one identity. Recently you have the circumstance where Hobart and North Hobart have been eliminated. There are other instances. We have lost an enormous amount of football clubs throughout Tasmania through lack of support and lack of funding. That is one instance where I believe it is at fault.

Also I have asked and been told - and if necessary I will quote - of instances where people who are supposed to be development officers appointed by AFL Tasmania to do some of the roles that are mentioned there, have refused to go to schools and other areas because their focus is on the elite. 'I do the elite; I am not going to schools or this area. I am to do the elite.' This is not proper and could be overcome by specifically designating financial support to the grassroots area, and monitoring initiatives that are put into place so they are carried out and are seen to be beneficial to the total area of the Tasmanian grassroots areas. That's what I believe and I believe we can do that.

Mr BOOTH - Graeme, it seems that you are indicating that the focus on AFL has distracted community grassroots football to the point of collapse almost. Is that a fair commentary?

Mr WILKINSON - There are definite signs of erosion or difficulties being created by what AFL Tasmania is doing with its funding - in my opinion. It's total focus on the elite level is understandable. I encourage excellence in any sport and I think it's wonderful that kids can go to a level of eliteness. But there is a multitude of underneath that which is of great importance to Tasmania that we should be focusing on as well, not just the elite.

Mr BOOTH - In regard to this inquiry and the funding that we are investigating, is it your view that money should not go through the AFL but go directly to grassroots football clubs across the state?

Mr WILKINSON - I believe there is a couple of alternatives. First, if you were to give the funding direct to the statewide bodies or to the grassroots area, you have to have in place a knowledge of how that funding would be distributed and for what.

Mr BOOTH - That was in regard to your comment about potentially gymnasiums and things like that?

Mr G WILKINSON - The other alternative, in giving the funding direct to grassroots bodies, is to create an independent body that monitors the funding that's given. I have

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suggested that we reduce the funding to AFL Tasmania significantly. I believe the government should show some support for the elite - okay. Whether that is done out of this \$500 000 or whether the government is providing that in another area that I am not aware, but in this area I am saying to reduce the \$500 000 down to say \$25 000 or \$50 000 maximum. The other \$450 000 residue should be added to, similar to what was being done in Victoria, a pool of funding, perhaps \$1 million here in Tasmania, that is then distributed to grassroots football. In Victoria \$17 million has been allocated to grassroots sport in football clubs to improve the facilities and everything else. I am saying of our funding of \$450 000 residue, to add \$500 000 and you nearly have \$1 million. You put that into an independent committee, appointed by the government, and that money then is there for allocation of grants received into the community for the football club that could then, in areas, provide a gymnasium.

We have a problem with obesity, with health and with everything. I have relayed that in the letters. We cannot deny that. Here is an opportunity that would be fantastically received by the public because it would be justifiable and seen as a move by the government to look after the health and wellbeing of kids through improving the facilities. I can't emphasise that more.

Mr BOOTH - That funding would basically be basically for anybody. If the grassroots football club auspiced the thing, and provided a space for the gymnasium or something, you're suggesting that would be something the broader community would use as well, in those regional areas particularly?

Mr WILKINSON - Yes Kim. If we had a gymnasium or a facility provided for health for our kids, it doesn't necessarily have to be for boys. It could be girls, or people in the community. As part of that funding you could pay someone a small amount to supervise running of the exercises and the program in the facility that is created.

Mr BOOTH - Are you saying that the focus on the elite and funding directly to the AFL may in fact have had an unintended consequence of perhaps dropping participation in the grassroots and associations with the clubs by the community, which ends up with an adverse health the outcome, perversely, that people become spectators to the elite rather than participating in clubs that generate some elite that go on to this other level.

Mr WILKINSON - I would have to think about that Kim. Whilst elements of what you said could be factors in people not supporting grassroots football, I still think there's a very substantial amount of people going to grassroots football.

Mr BOOTH - Perhaps if I could clarify. You talked passionately, and good on you, about the health issues we face, obesity and all those things, and the need to engage the community in a lifetime sport, rather than something you just participate in for a while, but I have a personal concern that we are tending to become a spectator nation rather than a participator nation in these sports, so people get their association by watching a game rather than being involved in either playing or supporting their local clubs. The question is whether directing a lot of money in Tasmania to AFL or any of the elite things, rather than putting it into the grassroots that then build capacity across the whole state, which will then filter through to the elite clubs, whether that's what we need to be doing, to be putting the money into those clubs to encourage greater participation? I could be completely wrong.

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Mr WILKINSON - I think what you've said is very true. I diversify a little, because a lot of things affect attendance. With the kids of today, the technology that's available to children, doesn't involve them being in physical exercise to what it used to be. When I was a kid, all you did was go to the footy every Saturday. Now it's televised. Live telecast is creating another problem, where people are inclined to stay home and watch the live telecast even though a lot of it's at night time. There's a lot of factors affecting attendances at grassroots football. If we were to improve the facilities and if we were to show the public that we are trying to generate and show them what value and how vital support for grassroots football is, they'll go back and increase the volume of people following football at grassroots level. There's still a lot of people going to the grassroots football but it would be increased significantly by that extra funding given to the bodies involved in the grassroots area to administer it.

Mr GUTWEIN - With the focus being on the elite, a message we've heard from a number of witnesses, what's your understanding of how well that's working for even the elite? What level of draft picks do we get out of Tasmania today that we were getting four or five or 10 years ago? Is it your understanding that we've actually been providing more elite players to go on to the AFL? Where does it sit?

Mr WILKINSON - I don't believe that's true. In the past we've produced absolute legends of football - Royce Hart, Stewart, Baldock. We produced those players - with none of this elite focus. They just came out of being involved in grassroots football. Today, with all of this focus on the elite and these programs and everything else that supposedly created areas of eliteness, we've still got four players drafted in a year. Their elite programs are not increasing the amount of draft players. They would still be picked up, if they were playing grassroots football, by the talent scouts of the AFL.

Mr GUTWEIN - With the second-tier clubs, how would you describe the health of the NTFA, which is a much larger NTFA today, clubwise? From your interaction with clubs, players and orders over the last couple of years, what's your view of the health of the clubs at that level?

Mr WILKINSON - A lot of the clubs are really struggling. We've got the Scottsdale circumstances and we've got outlying clubs that have folded in recent years. I have great admiration for what the NTFA has been able to achieve in these difficult circumstances without any funding from the area where it should be coming to help and assist. The grants were depleted. Greg Hay, when I asked him recently to clarify exactly that circumstance, said they get absolutely nothing. It's an absolute disgrace.

Mr GUTWEIN - On that issue, your understanding is, first, that in respect of players that might come through the NTFA and then play at statewide league level, if they are drafted to the AFL that those second-tier clubs and the NTFA receive no money for that draft?

Mr WILKINSON - That's my understanding.

Mr GUTWEIN - Second, from your experience what amount of money, if any, do you know flows back from the AFL to the NTFA to support programs?

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Mr WILKINSON - I'm not aware of any. That was relayed to me when I asked it specifically to Greg Hay.

Mr GUTWEIN - So in regard to those clubs at that second-tier level of the NTFA, what do they survive on currently, if there's no draft fees and no money from AFL Tasmania?

Mr WILKINSON - They exist on the goodwill and the devotion of the voluntary people, first of all - the heart and soul of any football club. They survive on sponsorship and support from businesses in their locality that go out of their way to help and try and keep a healthy existence in their townships right throughout Tasmania. That's how they survive, and on donations from good-hearted people who can see the value of what is at stake here but that's dying on the vine through lack of support. They come in and are supporting and staying supporting. If we don't do something to show these people that you are referring to in the grassroots area, we are going to have enormous problems. We think we've got problems escalating now; they will escalate at a higher rate than what we want in the future. We've got to do something now. That's why I am absolutely rapt that you people have taken it upon yourselves to do something about it.

I am heartened by the fact that so many other people put in submissions and appeared, and I hope that continues. I have tried to relay to you how I feel. I am just an average guy, but I want things better. I believe it can be done better and the government has a right to make sure their money is spent better.

Mr HARRISS - Graeme, when the St Kilda games were approved for playing in Tasmania you indicated there was an expectation of \$200 000 back to grassroots football. How was that to be the case? Was that documented, was it promised, was it part of a process?

Mr WILKINSON - Yes, I can provide you with the documentation from the *Herald Sun*, *Examiner*, or *Mercury*. I have that documentation. That was disputed.

Mr BOOTH - You mentioned that AFL Tasmania gets \$240 000 for a player who is drafted.

Mr WILKINSON - For four players.

Mr BOOTH - So that's \$60 000 per player, but they only pay \$15 000 to the statewide league tier-one clubs?

CHAIR - It is not necessarily \$60 000 a player; it depends on their age, doesn't it?

Mr WILKINSON - My understanding is that \$240 000 was paid for the four players. I was told that if they are under 18 then that the payment back to the statewide league club was only \$5 000. If they were over 18 when they were drafted it was \$15 000. I believe that for a player, no matter whether he is 18 or over, from the AFL's point view that is the figure they are currently paying - \$60 000 - which is different to the draft fee payment document which I supplied up to 2002, which illustrated the payments that were made. As I have indicated in my submission I believe that those payments, at the rate of inflation, would have escalated now to about \$95 000, but I may be incorrect.

Mr BOOTH - Given effectively that the grassroots provide the players in the first place, and then out of that you get the elites, it seems like a pretty cheap way of getting a player,

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from the AFL's point of view, if you are not going to give anything to the grassroots club. So given the level of government funding and support that has been given to AFL, were that to continue do you think it would reasonable that there be a requirement that, where a player is drafted, there be a flow-on right back down into the grassroots to encourage those clubs and to share the -

Mr WILKINSON - Absolutely. I advocated when I was on the NTFL board that the payment made by the AFL in draft payment back to AFL Tasmania should be distributed on the basis of 60 per cent to the club where the boy came from, no matter whether it was level one or down further. If you wanted to keep the money on top of your grants which are so substantial from every area, you keep 40 per cent to be seen to be supporting it, but give 60 per cent at least back to where the kid came from, to encourage the voluntary people to keep going.

CHAIR - To your knowledge has AFL Tasmania ever been challenged by anybody in relation to the funding and what they're doing now for community football right down to the community level?

Mr WILKINSON - I haven't stopped.

CHAIR - What sort of a response are you getting from them?

Mr WILKINSON - A brick wall, because it's a dictatorship, and it's a compromised dictatorship.

Mr BOOTH - What do you mean by that?

Mr WILKINSON - It's compromised by its television deal - \$1.26 billion. The television people are telling the AFL that you have got to change the rules of the game to get more goals, because we're not getting our ads. And that's the truth. If you want to have a check of it, that's why all the rule changes have been implemented. The coaches have implemented a style of percentage possession. It doesn't matter where you kick it as long as it's held in possession. So while all this play is going on backwards, forwards, this way and that way, there's time going and no goals being kicked, so the TV people are saying we're not getting enough ads for our TV. We're paying \$1.26 billion; you make the rule changes so that we get more goals.

CHAIR - In your submission you talk about Auskick, at a cost of over \$30 per child to participate. Then you go on to say that AFL Tasmania has limited participation. What is their involvement in Auskick?

Mr WILKINSON - Their involvement in Auskick, to my knowledge, is limited because the majority of Auskick clinics are run by the volunteer people in the area connected to football clubs. I can't give you an accurate area of involvement there, but I do know that the majority of Auskick clinics are run by voluntary people.

CHAIR - I am on the committee of the North Launceston junior football club, and it's our volunteers who run Auskick there.

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Mr WILKINSON - When I investigated it thoroughly some years back it was \$20 for Auskick; \$17.50 of that \$20 was relayed back to the AFL, and AFL Tasmania retained \$2.50 for every kid that participated in Auskick. It's a fundraiser for them. In today's climate I believe it's over \$30 to \$35 for a boy or girl to be involved in Auskick. The Auskick parcel that is provided to those children is from sponsorship to the AFL, which wouldn't cost them hardly a penny, yet it's a revenue raiser against parents who are under so much pressure to involve their kids in a healthy sport. We could do that with the local things. We could do it better for the money, and adding to it, to run our own health clinics.

CHAIR - Graeme, thank you very much for coming here today. It is a very interesting and very important area for all of us. This inquiry is about trying to identify where the money is going, what we're getting back for the money and whether or not it can be better used and spent.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr PHIL THURLOW WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - People from the *Mercury* are present.

Mr THURLOW - Yes.

CHAIR - While you are here, you have parliamentary privilege applies, and you are protected in that regard. Once you leave this environment, that protection no longer applies. If at any stage during the hearing you feel there is evidence you would like to give this committee in camera, in a confidential way, then all you've got to do is ask so we receive the evidence in camera. The committee will then make a determination of that.

Mr THURLOW - How does that affect the *Mercury*?

CHAIR - They're not allowed in. If we're taking evidence in-camera, then everybody has to be excluded from the room.

Mr BOOTH - If we do go in-camera your evidence won't appear in the published evidence, generally, unless we're told to do so.

Mr THURLOW - Would it be possible to do my whole submission in-camera?

Mr BOOTH - Chair, the is one issue that we need to think about is that these documents have been tabled, so they're now public submissions anyway.

CHAIR - On what basis do you want to go in-camera?

Mr THURLOW - I want to be honest with you and I do know quite a bit about the comings and goings. I don't really want to see myself in the paper.

Evidence taken in camera.

CHAIR - You have provided two submissions, and thank you very much for that.

Mr THURLOW - I think my submission is pretty clear. The reason I put one in is because I have an interest in footy and I have had a long involvement and thus it is there in black and white.

CHAIR - You might go into that a little - your involvement and your background in football.

Mr GUTWEIN - He used to play against me years ago.

Mr THURLOW - My father was one of the founders setting up the NTJFA and so I got involved with footy from a young age. I played junior footy, NTFA footy, state league footy, coached at NTFA level, NTFL level, the old state league, the new state league and I was involved with five or six years junior coaching. I have done the Auskick thing that I heard Wilkie talking about before with the volunteers. Then in later years it has led into being involved in committees and boards and steering committees, leading into the

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state league that is in place now as footy director up until the start of last year. I have a bit of an understanding of what goes on and probably particularly how AFL Tas operate.

CHAIR - So you have had quite a lot of involvement with AFL Tasmania over a period. What are they doing for football here, as a broad question?

Mr THURLOW - I got a few documents from what we were presented with back in 2008 when we were presented with this concept of the state league. There were some fairly broad-ranging statements in there of what they were going to do for footy. I don't believe that in the last five years footy has gone forward at all on most levels. Listening to Graeme before, he was talking more about NTFA, next level down, but all clubs are doing it tough. You guys are politicians, you all know what the economy's like. I suppose trying to find a parallel between blaming AFL Tas on the economy and how they operate football, has got to be brought into it, but as managers of football I don't think they've performed very well at all. What have they improved in footy in five years? That could be a general question to throw back at anyone. I can't think of anything.

Mr GUTWEIN - I want to ask a question directly from the submission. You state, 'based on my dealings with AFL Tas, and seeing how the organisation operates, I don't believe the state government should invest any monies at all into AFL Tas until the organisation is completely restructured, and a competent CEO is put in charge'. Can you expand on that?

Mr THURLOW - That's my view based on having dealings with him. I've got pretty good contacts in most state league clubs, and I believe the majority of them share the same view. Because of the funding model, sitting presidents are obviously reluctant to say too much, because that's how AFL Tas have set their little world up around them. I believe that management is incompetent.

Mr GUTWEIN - What's your understanding of the current funding model to the statewide league clubs?

Mr THURLOW - I don't know the direct link from the government's \$500 000 to the clubs, but the clubs get a \$50 000 development grant per club. Again, by looking at the overall big picture, I've read the initial media things from the Hobart hearing and seen a guy on the news, I think he was from the Old Scholars' league or whatever, but there's a perception from the non-state league clubs that the state league clubs are getting this \$50 000, and that's a lot of money. What the clubs have to do for that \$50 000, I don't think that's poor funding. I think the issue is more the fact that because there's incompetent management in place, that seems to have a source of money from elsewhere, and they waste money in different other areas, it makes your \$500 000 from the government look like it's not a very good investment, because they're doing this and that. My view is if they didn't get the \$500 000, that would make, who AFL Tas are accountable for, these guys more accountable to make good management decisions and have good processes in place.

Mr GUTWEIN - You have involvement with the Launceston Football Club. There's the grant and support from AFL Tas. What other support, if any, has that club received,

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whether through marketing of the state league or otherwise? How would you characterise the support the club receives apart from getting a \$50 000 grant?

Mr THURLOW - My view is from me, not the Launceston footy club. I suppose it's based on some involvements I've had with the Launceston footy club. I would say they get hardly any support. Again, I've pulled out a couple of old documents before I've come in here and one was their business plan. There was some outstanding issues document that our little subcommittee put together back when we were negotiating with them in the end of 2008 to form the state league. We had concerns about their ability to market the new competition. We had major concerns on management, their management set-up and the actual management of the AFL Tas, which is the still existing management, and their backgrounds to have the capacity to successfully run that. That's documented. With the history of their five years of how they have performed, you look at the general marketing of the competition, at the communication skills and the PR skills of the management, the general animosity against them from the public, their lack of communication skills with the clubs and their inability to listen to the member clubs' concerns and then make balanced decisions. They make a balanced decision over a cup of coffee, I believe, and they don't care what comes back to them. There are a couple of examples in my submission for that.

Mr GUTWEIN - I think you were here for the previous witness, Mr Wilkinson. He made the comment that AFL Tasmania operate like a dictatorship. You have said that there is a level of animosity. How would you characterise the relationship between the member clubs and the presidents and AFL Tasmania? Is it a two-way street? Does conversation go on?

Mr THURLOW - Over the last couple of days there are some emails circulating back to the president; they are realising this lack of transparency. Obviously what you guys are doing here is actually having a benefit, just the fact that you are investigating them. They are trying to sort out their funding model so that it is more transparent. Basically no clubs will get extra moneys that they have paid in the past. They will have what is called an underwriting policy. If someone gets into financial trouble they are allowed to apply for the funding which will come off their next year's grant, but not actually have it as additional funding. That is going on right at the minute, but previously there were some club presidents who were told, 'no-one gets any extra than you', and then this club president over here will get an extra \$50 000 to fund a full time coach, for example.

Mr GUTWEIN - You think there is a flurry of activity occurring as a result of the fact that this committee is in place?

Mr THURLOW - I believe there is, yes. From what contacts in the state, and existing boards and clubs are saying, yes. It is almost like some of them might be trying to cover some tracks.

Mr BEST - Are you aware of how the state-based AFL operates in any other states? Is it effective?

Mr THURLOW - One of the big issues with the current state league was AFL Tas' great plan five years ago to only allow two teams. Basically the two-team model was wrecking the clubs. From year one I think we had a reserves comp. The reason for only

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having a two-team model was because of the logistics with travelling. They did not want that third team to fit them in on one day. Travelling to the outer region games, the under 18s, for example, or under 19s would have to leave too early. So year one it was a reserve comp with basically a butchered under 19 comp. Then they realised they cannot do that to the younger generation, so in year two they had a bit-part reserves comp with a better structured under 18 comp. Then in the last three years they have played around with a colts model, which has been ineffective, because 15-year old undeveloped kids playing against 21-year olds is too big a gap.

Every year that has gone through from club land they have not listened to the actual member clubs. I was actually involved in a meeting at Ross a couple of years ago where the footy directors of the 10 clubs were all unanimous in wanting to go back and get the structure changed to get some older players to play colts instead of kicking them out of the competition, and they just came back with a stonewall. In my opinion the competition a month ago was nearly falling over, so now they have agreed to what we put to them two years ago.

Mr BEST - Would you say that the state-based AFL in some other states is operating successfully and is really supporting football in those states?

Mr THURLOW - Yes. All clubs I know of run a three-team model. so they have that pathway. All the state league clubs have good, strong junior structures. Wilkie was talking about volunteers and how everyone is struggling. State league clubs are really struggling for volunteers, and for every young fellow you push out of your club because they are not catering for them you are losing a volunteer as well. So these other competitions have the three teams. You basically have your juniors, then you have an under-18, a colts and then a senior side.

Mr BEST - Would you say those organisations are probably a bit more responsive to what the needs are?

Mr THURLOW - Yes, that is exactly right. It does not matter whether you are in parliament or in business or whatever, you have to have a management structure that will have the ability to communicate, digest information, take in the good ideas and sieve out the bad ones, and come up with balanced decisions, but AFL Tas does not operate like that.

Mr BOOTH - Phil, quoting from your own submission, you say you 'do not believe the state government should invest any monies at all into AFL Tasmania until the organisation is completely restructured and a competent CEO is put in charge'. You also say, 'the AFL Tas CEO, Mr Scott Wade, appears to be a control freak'. So is your submission that the AFL under Scott Wade is unfit to receive public money and if it was restructured it could become so, or is there a contradiction in terms by funding the peak body and not funding the grassroots football?

Mr THURLOW - I do not think that the actual funding is wasted in going to how it actually is meant to work - the grant to the clubs to develop their patches and whatever. But knowing what happens behind the scenes, there always seems to be money available for the CEO to make poor management decisions - for example, the South Launceston case. If the money was not available to him to spend or waste in other areas, they would have to manage the organisation a lot more precisely. If \$500 000 was not there, that is what I

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was getting at here, that would make them clean their act up, and either get their act together -

Mr BOOTH - Is it essentially because Scott Wade is a control freak that is the problem or is it systemic in the organisational structure of the AFL? In other words, would removing Scott Wade fix the problem or would you have just the same?

Mr THURLOW - This is not a witch-hunt for Scott Wade. I am reacting to what has been asked about what do you think can fix footy. If it was any other organisation and you did an appraisal on him, I think what I am saying is true.

Mr BOOTH - If he was replaced with a different executive, say if they had a different CEO, would the problem be resolved?

Mr THURLOW - I believe it would be resolved. You only have to look at soccer. It was on the news the other week. I could not believe the number of people at that local soccer game in Hobart. The chief executive of soccer I do not think has been in the job for too long. He seems to be leading from the front. He has the organisation running how it should be and they are very successful in what they are doing. The major league soccer in the state should not be any better supported than the major league football, but we cannot get people to go to football.

Mr BOOTH - I have a general concern about the commercialisation and corporatisation of sport in general. The same thing has happened to the racing industry. What was once grassroots, broad-based regional community groups, families and farmers and all sorts of things - part of that history of racing - is suffering a massive decline in track numbers for a whole lot of reasons, partly the corporatisation and commercialisation of it. Do you think that with the model of the AFL, this super league, elite player thing, is turning us into a nation of observers and spectators rather than participants?

Mr THURLOW - I am of the view that there should be a premier competition, but it has to be structured in a way where people can actually watch it most weeks. Supporters don't seem to want to travel. The thing that has come out of the five years of the state league is whenever our club travelled away you would only get a handful of mums and dads, but you don't get a supporter base that actually follows. If we get a home game against a southern team, the same thing; it is one of our poorest drawing crowds.

We need to have the pathway and that is where the funding comes in. The community clubs, the next tier down, are saying they don't get any support and one thing or another, but they actually get a direct link. If you look at the NTFA club coaches, for example, where have they come from? Competent coaches just don't fall off trees. Brian Finch, because he is a guy out of the Launceston landscape, is coaching OLs this year. He has come through the system. You cannot say it is just because of the Launceston Football Club; it's the whole thing.

The longer it goes the more there will be spin-offs for NTFA and so forth. An ex-Mariner player like Mark Walsh played with Hillwood this year, and there are a couple from our club going out to Deloraine next year. The spin-offs for them are fine, but I still believe that there should be, because you need some investment going into the schools and the programs that they do as part of the funding.

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Mr BOOTH - Do you think, then, the money should go, rather than through the AFL at the moment, straight into the grassroots, and if so how would you distribute that, rather than a \$500 000 annual grant to the AFL to promote effectively grassroots football based on the KPIs?

Mr THURLOW - It's a hard question to answer because it depends whether there is a state league competition. The state league competition has development zones. The state is split up into 10 components. The \$50 000 grant, if that is the money that is coming from the government, each of the 10 clubs can then go out and develop their zone, providing that development is happening rightly, which I believe in most cases it is at that level. I think it is the right model. But if there is no state league, you have to look at how that could happen to still get that development work done for football.

Mr BOOTH - The evidence that we have been provided so far has been that there does not appear to be any money flow back out to the intended recipients. AFL just gobble it up somehow internally.

Mr THURLOW - I would have thought - and AFL Tasmania will no doubt scurry around and try to burn this - that the \$500 000 is funded by the 10 development officers. From the club that I am involved with, or was involved, I believe what they do actually costs every bit of that. They go around the primary schools and do the Aurora schools program and different things. For \$50 000 it would cover a wage, car, phone and equipment; it's all there. It sounds like a large pool of money - \$500 000. When you split it up it's not. The problem with the \$500 000 is that it's helping to prop up an organisation that's not operating for the betterment of footy. To tie it all back and fix it all up is why you learned gentlemen are here.

Mr BOOTH - You've said effectively that the AFL is unfit to receive the funding until they put themselves under proper management.

Mr THURLOW - That's the summary of it, I reckon.

Mr HARRISS - Going directly to the state government's funding to the tune of \$500 000, it seems not to be trickling down to grassroots football. I'm aware that with the establishment of two new clubs in the state league, Kingborough and the Prospect Hawks, AFL Tasmania have suggested to them what could be an expected revenue stream, against the backdrop of AFL Tasmania consistently saying they're not interested in crowd numbers and it doesn't matter. How the heck do clubs survive and generate sufficient revenue to fund the operations of the club, if you don't have crowds? If those clubs then struggle, will AFL Tasmania disproportionately fund those clubs to ensure their viability, and thereby not have another \$500 000 to trickle down to grassroots football? In addition to that, with your precise involvement with the development of clubs and football, are you aware whether the junior development clinics, which the Hawthorn Football Club conduct when they're in Tasmania, are coordinated in any way by AFL Tasmania, or does the Hawthorn footy club just get out there and do it anyway y - so that might not be a drain on AFL Tasmania resources?

Mr THURLOW - With that last question, these development guys get involved. If Hawthorn are here, and there's a clinic, all the development guys go. They support it.

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They organise the local development guys in whatever region. If it's a North Melbourne game down south they'd do it, but up here the Launceston clubs would get involved.

Mr HARRISS - The other one was really back to the funding model for the new clubs and how the hell do they generate sufficient revenue. Did AFL Tasmania suggest to them what their budgets ought be, and what they think they might generate?

Mr THURLOW - I put in my submission that they've firmly shafted the South Launceston footy club. As far as funding goes, you guys have got to find that correlation between the \$500 000 and the fact that Wade's probably got an excess pool of money he draws on to cover up on poor management decisions. That's the correlation where it heads to. From a South Launceston point of view, in the licence agreement and the business plan originally, one of the key pillars is that AFL Tas were going to only invite financial clubs into the competition five years ago. Anyone who got offered a licence wasn't going to have any debt - starting in the black. Within 12 months it's all history with Devonport. Devonport were in serious trouble. On the South Launceston case, AFL Tas management structure were going to be responsible for making sure that clubs don't get into financial trouble. If they are right on the case every quarter with checking clubs' finances, most of us would agree they wouldn't get into financial trouble, because they wouldn't get to the degree of trouble before they could nip it in the bud. So they failed the South Launceston club in that. When it was worked out that South were in trouble, the assistance they gave them was CEO who formed the Prospect Junior Club. It was a previous employer and a consultant to AFL Tasmania who put him in there. We can all work out what the history of that was. They increased their player payments dramatically. I know this from doing the football director's job and what players said they were getting paid. If someone is in financial trouble, why do you increase your expenditure? They have then been successful, increased their expenditure and won a premiership, but they have been kicked out of the competition because financially they weren't sound. This is no reflection on the South Launceston Football Club; it is the reflection of AFL Tasmania for letting them get to that trouble. If someone is in trouble and you fund out of a well of money as CEO, stick it in there to straighten them out, why aren't they straightened out? Why weren't South helped?

Right as we speak, AFL Tasmania are putting things in place where they will underwrite clubs as far as they can get funding out of their next year's budget. That would also be so that it doesn't happen in a South Launceston situation again.

About the management incompetence, why let that happen now? If they were good managers of the competition, it wouldn't have happened to South Launceston and it wouldn't have happened to Devonport. Devonport want to get out of the competition. They have served their five years, but because of a side deal between Wade and the NTFL in that they wouldn't take clubs from their competition because AFL Tasmania can't find another club that is interested, Devonport are made to stay in the competition against their wishes. That is just wrong. You talk about crowd numbers. When North Bombers play Devonport out here, how many Devonport people are going to be interested in Devonport this year?

Mr BEST - Is there a defined process that AFL goes through with these clubs? You are saying that these clubs need assistance; is there an actual process or it's ad hoc?

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Mr THURLOW - There was a process under licence agreement with the clubs, but the management didn't have the ability to follow their own process.

Mr BEST - Are you talking about AFL?

Mr THURLOW - Yes.

Mr GUTWEIN - In regard to what's occurred with South and Devonport and the extra licences, you are aware that behind the scenes there is a work of going on at the moment. Is that AFL Tasmania shutting the gate now that the horse has bolted, through poor management, in your opinion, and that we at this point where we have lost clubs, where new licences had to be arranged, simply because AFL Tasmania didn't do the job that they said they would do through those agreements?

Mr THURLOW - Yes, that's right. They are basically covering their tracks. Up to a month ago, the competition nearly fell apart. There were a couple of Hobart clubs; they couldn't quite get that Hobart city licence across the board. Remember they announced that the Mersey licence was across the board. They announced that and that didn't happen, so that has kept Devonport in there against their will. There are so many different, little things that have been going on in the last couple of months and they are pretty fragile, and there has been a lot of pressure on them from you guys but also from the clubs. My belief is that the clubs want a premier competition, but a premier competition that is going to be sustainable and viable - with crowds. Prospect are coming in and no doubt AFL Tasmania want Prospect to come in because they know they have stuffed up South. They will look pretty stupid if they can't get Prospect up after turning their back on South. We went through all this back in 2009. They would be making it all rosy and whatever but I don't believe that the figures that they are supporting Prospect with, and probably the other new clubs, are achievable. They will be all glossed up for sure.

Mr BOOTH - In your submission in regard to South Launceston Football Club, you say that 'just after Daniel Smedley took over at the SLFC, he and Scott Wade apparently met the Meander Valley Council to talk about a potential team from the Prospect area in the TSL'. That seems extraordinary that you have somebody who is looking after South Launceston negotiating to start another team in competition. Can you expand on what you believe?

Mr THURLOW - That has probably happened. Yes, we find it extraordinary. It is inconsistent with what they have done. They are actually funding a club, which is the right thing to do to help the club survive. First of all, they have mucked up by not working with them closely enough to realise that they are in as much debt as they were. When they realised that then they came in and tried to help - put in a CEO to straighten them out. The CEO used to be employed by AFL Tasmania as the consultant who set up the Prospect junior club. He is the guy that is meant to be straightening them out. He put on record the amount of money that he paid players, which ended up getting a premiership, fine, but they are not there now. A lot of those decisions seemed to be made at the time to help another club, not the club he was at.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Phil.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr BADEN HAYWOOD WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - This is an open, public hearing. There is a recording through the *Hansard*. Parliamentary privilege applies to you while you are in this environment but once you leave here it no longer applies. If at any time through the hearing you felt that there was something of a confidential nature that you would like to pass on to the committee we can take evidence in camera.

Mr HAYWOOD - No, there is nothing that I believe is contentious. My reason for coming is some concerns I have over funding for junior football. The original model was that government funds were, as I understand it, distributed through the relevant football associations into their junior league, which are organisations like the Southern Tasmanian Junior Football League.

CHAIR - Baden, what is your background in football, your involvement in the clubs and associations.

Mr HAYWOOD - It started a long, long time ago when I took a six-year-old to Auskick, which at that stage was run by the South Launceston Football Club. Two weeks later I was actually an Auskick volunteer moving on through South Launceston after Ben, my son, finished his two years in Auskick. I spent a couple of years in under 11 football at South and progressed through the South junior process into senior club football. During that time I found myself team manager of junior teams, under-19 teams, reserve teams, at once stage senior teams, NTJFA delegate, an NTFLL board member, on NTFLL select committees, and became a South Launceston senior board member and junior board member. I was asked by the president at the time to do a survey and a review on amalgamating the two clubs at South Launceston to bring it back under the one club. So instead of the junior football club and the senior football club we would have one club. We successfully did that and that is when that South Launceston junior football program took off. The model we had was recognised according to AFL Tas as in the top of three or four in Australia. Essentially it was cradle-to-grave football.

Then I was a board member and then eventually president of the South Launceston Football Club and the board that I led took the South Launceston Football into the statewide competition. The model that is used in the TSL is the South Launceston suggested model. Originally AFL Tas wanted teams, not clubs; they wanted one elite team. Certainly South and most of the presidents at the time did not think that would work, so we put the model to them, which was the two- and then the three-team competition which they accepted and it seemed to run successful for a while.

My concern is what is happening to that \$500 000 of government funds that are meant to be going to junior football. Original the TSL gave the clubs \$50 000 which was for junior development. So there was a program set up. South Launceston had about 36 primary schools, and arrangements were made with the headmasters, appointments done and a follow-up done. I have a strong suspicion these days that this money is going into other areas. It is funding an elite competition - draft picks and things like that. What Tasmania really needs is that money coming back at a grassroots level into junior football. That is what I would be asking this committee to investigate. Is that actually happening because there are strong suspicions that it is.

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We sent a submission to the board of the South Launceston Football Club in November last year asking them a series of questions concerning junior football in the community. Despite lots of requests they did not answer that. One of the things in there is: are you planning to disband your junior club? We did not get an answer. Well they did, and spun it back off into a separate entity.

Through the troubles of South Launceston, questions were asked at various meetings: why did you do it? Well, the answer was because AFL said that was the best model. They don't want statewide clubs involved in junior football now. Why? At the same time, two executives, one at AFL Tas and one at the statewide league, were at another club telling them that they should be bringing their junior clubs together.

I am not here on behalf of the South Launceston footy club. It is just me with a passionate interest in junior sport, for reasons other than seeing kids involved. It keeps them fit, keeps them out of trouble and they become better people, but where is that money going? I don't believe it is going to where the government would want that money to go.

CHAIR - What is AFL Tas doing to give support to Auskick? Are they providing personnel at all, or funds?

Mr HAYWOOD - I think they do through the Auskick kits. I think they are NAB kits that give kids a little rules book and things like that. From what I can see now it has gone from the model that was AFL-funded back to volunteer organisations. With the advent of the state league it was never meant to do that. It was meant to grab these kids that are interested and take them through. From my experience in junior sport, kids drop out for all sorts of reasons. If their friends are going to play tennis, they go to play tennis. It does not mean they need to be in footy. If this money is meant for community football, then let us have it.

CHAIR - The funding is provided for a number of reasons. Sport and Recreation say that it is to drive significant economic and social returns to the community and provide a direct benefit to football at all levels in Tasmania, and increase support for grassroots football.

Mr HAYWOOD - I think it is increasing the result for grassroots football because if you go to a junior football game you have a captive crowd. They have two sets of grandparents, and parents, and they grab them in; at that stage it's working. I think the gentlemen here from the NTFA will say that it's working there, but it's not working at the elite football because it doesn't seem to be coming back.

CHAIR - What is AFL Tas doing to increase support for grassroots football and football at all levels, to benefit football at all levels?

Mr HAYWOOD - At grassroots football I don't think they are doing much at all. I think the focus now is on elite football. I think their focus is on draft picks, because a fair amount of their funding back from the AFL itself is via draft picks. I think that is where the focus is and it is lost from community football. At the end of the day Tasmania has to be based on community football; we are not big enough to focus on elite football.

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Mr GUTWEIN - Based on your background, Baden, and as the former president of South Launceston, we have heard from a previous witness about some of the challenges that he sees in regards to what has occurred with football in Tasmania. Do you have a view on where we currently stand today? We have a new licence in the north, a couple of new licences in south, a new licence on the north-west coast. You were one of the presidents involved moving into that statewide league, and you and I had a lot of discussions at that time around that.

Mr HAYWOOD - Absolutely.

Mr GUTWEIN - What is your view five years down the track?

Mr HAYWOOD - I think it has gone off track from the original plan. Prospect, and it doesn't have a name yet, had as I understand a verbal agreement with the Launceston City Council to play games here, but it doesn't have a training base. It has a president but no board. From the little thing I read in the *Examiner* I understand the previous development officer at South is now employed by them and that was only because he had a reference, so if you were wanting tickets for a function they had to call him. But the South Launceston thing is an absolute debacle. It is a proud club and it can trace its history back I think to the 1850s. Middle of the road, certainly, and not playing to its full potential, but paying its bills and it got to the situation where the CEO came in, appointed by AFL Tas, to run the club. I've been to a lot of the meetings and it seemed to be to take that club over. It very nearly happened. South Launceston Football Club was very nearly merged with whatever the new entity is going to be. Personally, I don't think it'll get off the ground. We're in a season where players start forgetting about football into Christmas. Come back in January and it still doesn't have a name or a home.

The Devonport issue was the same. I think Devonport realised that what they needed to do, and get funding available, wasn't there. South's is a situation where the funding wasn't there, they were encouraged by AFL Tas to spend money they didn't have. From the financials, AFL Tas were putting in extra money; it achieved the purpose of winning a premiership, but it's gone. It's never going to defend that premiership, which is so disappointing. It was a very active community club.

Mr GUTWEIN - Coming back to the original focus, being junior football, what do you think of these machinations at a state league level; what message is that sending to junior footballers? Does it make it more or less attractive for parents to be involved?

Mr HAYWOOD - I think less attractive. To get my son involved in a sport that he enjoys, and certainly the Hawthorn Football Club has created that passion in Tasmanian football, but kids don't see past it. There are the elite kids that will want to go on and be drafted, but a lot of kids don't want to do that. They just want to play football, have a great time, and move on from there. I don't think it's done much to improve junior football at all.

Mr BOOTH - Baden, this South Launceston deal seems very odd to me. Would it be fair to say that the AFL tried to kill South Launceston?

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Mr HAYWOOD - In my opinion they did. It's hard to figure out at what point in time. As Phil said, AFL itself created the Prospect Junior Football Club in their model. South Launceston at the time supported it, because we had 300 kids that wanted to play footy and we just didn't have the resources to do it. A lot of those kids went to Prospect. It became an NTFA division 2 club. It's going straight from there to a TSL club in partnership with its junior club. I can't see how the junior side of it is ever going to fund. By AFL's own words, they're putting now \$100 000 into each club, but they're saying the clubs need an extra \$250 000 on top of it. The money's not there. The community doesn't have that sort of money to fund an elite competition.

I think this inquiry can ask questions of AFL Tas: what did you do, and why did you let South Launceston drop off? In my opinion, if the North Launceston Football Club hadn't raised concerns over the amount of money that was going in there, they would've kept funding it. You have a league where, in five years, already four of the original clubs aren't there.

Mr BOOTH - Do you think, then, that the funding should not go to the AFL currently, but should go directly -

Mr HAYWOOD - I think it should go to the relevant junior bodies with controls, and can be done through Sport and Recreation, that that money is accounted for. I think the community would get better benefit from it if it was all going to junior football - maybe through the NTFA. You'd have to be wary of it going to clubs, because money might go into other areas, which I think is what's happening now. It needs to go to junior and community football.

Mr BOOTH - It should directly go there because that's a better model?

Mr HAYWOOD - It's a better model. The NTJFA is recognised Australia-wide for the amount of teams it has, and it's expanding every year. The SFL, the junior version down here, is as well. They're more than capable of managing those funds. At the end of the day with junior sport, if the funding is not getting to where it is needed, it comes back on parents and volunteers. There are heaps of people in juniors that volunteer but work practices have changed a lot of that, Kim. Seven-day trading and things means that parents might want to be involved and in some cases the clubs might have to employ people to do it, insuring volunteers as an expense, and if that money was going to junior football directly it would be a good model.

Mr BEST - With AFL Tasmania and with the AFL in other states, do you believe the AFL has been successful in football in other states in comparison to here?

Mr HAYWOOD - Yes, certainly, because all of the states except Tasmania have teams playing in the AFL itself. In some states they control the licences. AFL Tasmania doesn't control a licence because we don't have a statewide team. The original concept of the state league was really good but for some reason it's gone completely away from what it was meant to be.

Mr BEST - Do you think that is a major failure, that the state's failed to get an AFL team, of AFL Tasmania?

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Mr HAYWOOD - No, I don't think it is. Personally, I don't think Tasmania ever will; we just don't have enough people and I don't think we have the funding base. To be successful, an AFL club needs to raise about \$50 million. I don't think Tasmania has the base for that. Others may say that we do, but I don't think we do. Our focus is on our community football. We can do that really well and still be important to the AFL itself.

Mr GUTWEIN - When the concept of the statewide league first started, it was the right concept and it seemed to work well but for some reason hasn't.

Mr HAYWOOD - No, I don't think it has, Peter.

Mr GUTWEIN - Is there anything that you can see or that you feel has contributed to where we are at the moment?

Mr HAYWOOD - There have been so many changes within what AFL Tasmania expected from the state league. Those changes have come and they haven't worked. The original model with three teams was working. The clubs were funding the reserve part of it because the clubs themselves didn't want those reserves players going, because usually they were senior players coming to the end of their career and which were potential volunteers. I don't think it is working now because they haven't embraced the community. South could play Clarence, arguably the top team in the league, and get 60 or 70 people. For some reason the public hasn't embraced the TSL competition.

Mr GUTWEIN - A number of clubs understand and there has been a fair bit of public commentary from some club presidents about the shortcoming in the current model. Why do you think those issues aren't being heard by AFL Tasmania?

Mr HAYWOOD - I think they are, though they may not be.

Mr GUTWEIN - They may be heard but not acted on.

Mr HAYWOOD - Yes. Maybe the clubs are a bit scared to say exactly what they feel, because they need the funding from AFL Tasmania coming back. It is in the media that it's going to be \$100 000 next year. They would need that and they would be wary of saying anything that would affect that funding.

Mr GUTWEIN - So there's a golden handcuff?

Mr HAYWOOD - Possibly, yes. I have out of the state league for three to four year. My focus was to get this committee to ascertain whether the money the government is providing is getting to where I believe the government wants it to go, which is junior and community football. I am not sure that it is but, hopefully, collectively, that question will be answered. It needs to be.

CHAIR - The terms of reference are around exactly that point - where it is going, what it is doing and whether it is achieving what the government or Sport and Recreation want of it.

Mr HAYWOOD - Absolutely.

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Mr BOOTH - Baden, you paint a fairly grim picture of AFL and what is happening at state league and grassroots levels. What do you see if there is no change in the models of the funding streams and so forth, and where do you see support for Tasmania in five or 10 years time.

Mr HAYWOOD - Hopefully, it improves but I think it has to be at grassroots level. I passionately believe that kids coming through need to have somewhere to go, and at the moment I do not think they have. They are dropping out of football. We have rumours that young guys do not want to travel around the state. They are happy to go and play NTFA football, SFL or TFL football, but right now I think we are at the crossroads with elite football.

That money that is designated to go to community football; is that where it is going? I think Tasmania as a whole wants to have an answer to that. I travel the state a bit and I talk to a lot of people, but it all seems to be that there is not a lot of money coming back into junior football. This is the ideal vehicle to find out if it is, and if it isn't to ensure that it is.

CHAIR - Baden, thank you very much for being here.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr GREG HAY, Mr GEOFF LYONS, Mr ROBERT ANDERSON AND Mr PHILLIP ATKINS, NTFA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Whilst you are here, parliamentary privilege applies. Once you move outside of here, you are no longer protected. This is being recorded. If we get to a stage that you feel there is some evidence that should be taken in camera, for whatever reason, then raise that and the committee will then make a determination on whether that will be appropriate.

Mr HARRISS - You are aware that the committee has been established for the purposes of satisfying ourselves as to the disbursement of the \$500 000 state government money provided to AFL Tasmania. Your submission indicates that AFL Tasmania at an earlier time provided some funding to the NTFA, that was then reduced over a couple of years from \$30 000 down to \$20 000 then subsequently from \$10 000 down to nothing. Is your understanding that was identified by AFL Tasmania as specifically from the state government funding or it is just that the state government funding goes into a consolidated fund of AFL Tasmania and whatever they do with their total funds is their business?

Mr LYONS - Greg is best to answer this, but I understood it did not come from the Tasmania government money.

Mr HAY - No, it did not. It goes back to the Biggs report all those years ago. Ed Biggs came over and did a report on Tassie football and they came up with a thing that each region should be funded to the tune of \$30 000. That was then passed on from AFL Tasmania to us and I presume it would not have come from the \$500 000, or it may, we do not know. It would have come from their income.

Mr HARRISS - Have you made, since the cessation of the funding to the NTFA, ongoing requests to AFL Tasmania to provide some administrative support, whether it be in kind or a dollar value?

Mr HAY - No, we have not. You will probably see in the submission that years ago, out of our own funds, set up our offices under the old Cameron Tyson stand. When that was knocked down, we were promised an area similar in this stand, which never came to fruition. We were put into a sponsor's box next door and back in the Devil's days we could pack all our gear to one end, but AFL days everything had to be moved out and put into storage at the other end of the building.

We went from there to a little three by three metre section at the end of this building, with all our gear basically spread around five garages around town. We had to go somewhere else. At that stage AFL Tas were charging us no rent. They were providing phones, email, et cetera, but that was it.

Mr HARRISS - When that funding was completely withdrawn as your submission suggests, AFL Tasmania justified that decision on the basis that they could better use the funds in terms of developing community football. Have you seen any evidence in the NTFA of a direct contribution by AFL Tasmania to that development of community football?

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Mr HAY - No. I have only been there 30 years, Robert has been there 31 years, so we have a lot of years up our sleeves in this committee.

Mr GUTWEIN - I will go directly to your submission and quote from it:

I have no doubt that AFL Tasmania will be able to justify the government grant to community football as they now have a community football department and they will have answers to each and every question put to them. However, I note with interest Scott Wade and Dominic Baker referred to the Tasmanian Football Council on a number of occasions in recent weeks and most particularly since your inquiry was announced. I also note that the AFL Tasmania community football department has been out and about since your inquiry was announced.

I can take it from that, prior to the inquiry being announced, they were not out and about? Could you expand on that please?

Mr HAY - I can tell you one thing. I think Brett Mansell who was the northern representative on that, probably appointed 2.5 years ago, the only time I have seen him at the NTFA was to drop something off from AFL Tas that was being given to us. He has never once knocked on the door and said how are we going and we have not, by the same token knocked on his door. I would have thought when he first took on the job -

Mr LYONS - He did come to a meeting recently.

Mr GUTWEIN - AFL Tasmania, as the senior football body in the state, with the statewide league, what is their relationship with the NTFA broadly? Do you believe that the development of football in Tasmania is being fostered as a result of the AFL's leadership?

Mr LYONS - We do not really have much to do with AFL Tasmania.

Mr GUTWEIN - Should you?

Mr ANDERSON - We did invite Scott Wade and a couple of his representatives to a meeting not long ago which they all attended but other than us inviting them, I do not think we have seen them at our board meetings or club meetings for a long period.

Mr HAY - No.

Mr GUTWEIN - How would the AFL satisfy themselves as to how football is running in the state if they are not engaging with you?

Mr ATKINS - We tell them what is happening.

Mr HAY - I think they have their own agendas in relation to elite programs and I think that is where they see themselves.

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Mr GUTWEIN - The impact of what has happened with the most recent licence arrangements and operation of the new licence in the north and South Launceston and its application to come back to your association. Changes in any association have flow-on impacts to other associations. Was that ever discussed, or raised by the NTFA, with the AFL?

Mr LYONS - Not with the AFL. We have not discussed it.

Mr HAY - Nor were we asked.

Mr GUTWEIN - On that basis then, AFL Tasmania, in making that arrangement and stating publicly at one stage they were quite happy for South Launceston to go off to another league, did not have any discussions at all with you as the other league when they would land it or the challenges you might face?

Mr LYONS - We read it in the *Examiner*.

Mr GUTWEIN - You read it in the *Examiner*?

Mr LYONS - Basically, yes. It kept us up to date.

Mr BOOTH - AFL reject a club and expect you to pick it up?

Mr LYONS - I don't know if they rejected it. They offered them a part licence. That has not come before us. We cannot believe all that we read but we read about that.

Mr HAY - We are the obvious choice because there is only the north-east and us in this region.

Mr BOOTH - With regard to the \$500 000 that is provided specifically for community regional football development, you have made a point in your submission that 'AFL Tasmania would achieve greater results in its fostering and developing of all aspects of grassroots football if it were to involve the NTFA and the NTJFA and the Umpires Association'. Is there a position that you might have that it would be better if it went straight to those groups rather than going through the AFL? Does the AFL have a role to take that \$500 000 or would it be better used for the purposes provided, if it went directly to the groups you mentioned?

Mr HAY - That money is okay going to where it is, to AFL Tasmania, provided it does filter down further. In our submission probably one of the biggest things is taking away the umpires' grant. Umpires are a big part of football. We spent \$180 000 with them this year. Their grant should be reinstated. That would then save the NTFA another \$5 000. We were requested to put in when the grant was taken down.

Mr LYONS - Put into coaching for umpires.

Mr ATKINS - I guess the biggest thing, what we're doing here this morning, is we're all discussing the best way to do things. That's the biggest lack we see, there's never any discussion. Nobody knows your garden better than you know it. Nobody knows our area and our league or association better than we do. But we never get a chance to

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comment, make suggestions or anything. Especially when all the work is done by our people is all voluntary.

Mr BOOTH - You make the point in your submission also, and we talked about this earlier on. You say the reasons sighted the funding was withdrawn was that AFL Tasmania felt they were better placed to use the funds for community football and their opinion the NTFA were yet to see evidence of this fact.

Mr HAY - Apart from the elite models, I don't think they give a damn about community football to be quite honest.

Mr BOOTH - So why would you say that you think it's okay for that \$500 000 to go to AFL rather than -

Mr HAY - Because it's got to go somewhere, and they are, for all intents and purposes the peak body.

Mr BOOTH - You don't see a different way of it being distributed, what you're suggesting the AFL should be required to make sure that -

Mr HAY - Yes I do. Who else do you give it to, do you then split it up and give it to the three regional things, the north west coast, there's another three or four competitions under them. The NEFU here, junior associations. They're best suited for it, but with probably tougher guidelines.

Mr LYONS - It's not much money, \$500 000. If you say \$500 000 for AFL Tas to get junior Auskick stuff happening, and get players drafted, which is what it's all about. Then you give \$300 000 to each of the associations, we could do a lot. Things that could happen which we deem to be state government funded, what about a netball court at every grounds, so we can amalgamate netball and football and create that community culture that happens in country Victoria. I know about that because my daughter's been playing there for the last three or four years.

If you're splitting up \$500 000 into ten state league teams, then this is not a lot of money. With \$50 000, they've got development officers in their clubs who do stuff that I don't know about. Obviously they're not out with our clubs very often, but they're doing some junior development work. Fifty thousand wouldn't pay the salary of a development officer. It's not much money.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is an important issue for the committee, the adequacy of the funding that's being provided, and your comments about Victoria. In 2004, they had a football inquiry similar to this. One of the recommendations that came out of that was the strengthening of Australian rules football links with netball as well, and the development of courts. Is that something that-

Mr LYONS - Discussions have been raised at our council meeting, rather NTFA. If this committee could suggest that we have a netball court at every ground, and that the NTFA and the NTNA could get together. Most of the elite netball is done in Tasmania at night during the week. The Saturday competition probably isn't what it was for netball because there is this link with boys and girls. If you could have the

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model they have in Victoria it would improve both football and netball and community culture, particularly in the small regional towns. There is no doubt about that. My daughter has played with Sandhurst in Victoria for the last few years, in Bendigo. The culture is fantastic.

Mr ANDERSON - It has always been big in the NFU, hasn't it?

Mr LYONS - NFU clubs - about four of their existing five clubs have netball teams attached to them. If you could do that it would improve not only the football and netball, but people, families, would be drawn to the game and it would improve the culture. If you could do away with seven day trading that might help a bit.

Mr HAY - We have had approaches from the North East Football Union about them joining us at this stage. We have said please stay out there because they have that netball thing, those community things. We are about to help them with rostering, tribunals, they are going to start using our tribunals, so we are trying to assist them where we can to stay out there.

Mr BOOTH - Would resolving the sponsorship clash with regard to Carlton - you are sponsored by Boags, but you can't use Aurora Stadium because of that sponsorship clash, would that assist in your ability to provide for better community football outcomes?

Mr LYONS - Our revenue is significantly down, playing our grand finals away from Aurora Stadium. A significant loss.

Mr LYONS - Our division one grand final over the last two years is a total of \$20 000 compared to what we had.

Mr LYONS - Not having access to this, in our opinion - this oval was funded by the local council, the state government and the federal government in terms of the development of it and the fact that the council have signed a deal which prevents the local brewery, who pay a lot of money in rates and other taxes to this state and local government. What frightens me is what happens if World Cup Rugby want to come back to Tasmania and want to come to York Park. Do we say, 'No, you cannot have Heineken as a major sponsor for World Cup Rugby'. It is ridiculous and disappointing.

Mr ATKINS - One of the biggest things, no matter what grade of football you play, is it is always your aim to play on the best arena available, isn't it? Every kid aims to want to play for an AFL team one day and run out on the MCG. We would love be able to have our players run out onto Aurora Stadium, which is one of the best venues in Australia.

Mr BOOTH - How much effect would that have in a gross sense, do you think?

Mr HAY - Well, \$20 000 it cost us.

Mr ATKINS - And that has come out of existing funds. Lost revenue.

Mr ATKINS - It is not only that. We had a few problems, as you probably read about in the paper, where people do the wrong things, where they take grog in in cars. You can stop all that here. You can control it better here than you can in other grounds.

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Mr HAY - Parking.

Mr ATKINS - All the negative things.

Mr LYONS - Any hint of bad weather, at least they can get undercover in the grandstands. It is a great advantage to us, having access to York Park.

Mr BOOTH - That would be good to resolve that.

CHAIR - Has AFL Tasmania become involved in this with you to negotiate a position?

Mr HAY - I was not at the meeting but Scott Wade has offered to sit down and mediate now.

Mr LYONS - It is a local council decision, the York Park Authority, have made a decision which the council support, it is their subcommittee, and this is a very disappointing decision. When you take into account the money that Boags, in terms of rates and other taxes that they pay to the city council, compared with whatever it is that Carlton United pay extra above the offer that Boags made.

Mr BEST - It seems strange, going through your submission, where the AFL have pulled away the financial support for umpiring and you were charged a fee for the coaches' level one accreditation. You must have some understanding, or what the reasoning was, that they put in relation to some of these positions? Mr Booth covered the point about your sponsorship being reduced under the Biggs report and then the lack of access to Mr Young. Are they saying that they believe this is his community football or they can do it better? What is the reasoning that you receive or don't you receive any reasoning at all?

Mr HAYWOOD - We don't receive any reasoning.

Mr BEST - None whatsoever?

Mr HAYWOOD - No. With relation to the coaches, it is a requirement that all coaches, through the junior and in the TFA, are now level 1 accredited. To facilitate that, both the juniors and the NTFA pay that. I mentioned 60 trainers have been put through level 2 workplace first aid and level 1 sports medicine.

Mr LYONS - At the NTFA expense.

Mr HAYWOOD - At the NTFA and NTJFA expense, yes.

Mr BEST - You mentioned a levy that you had to bring in to try to cover some of those costs with the umpiring et cetera.

Mr HAYWOOD - Yes. We have paid the \$5 000 and we also paid out another \$3 000 honorarium to assist them in recruitment.

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Mr BEST - There is no understanding what the reasoning is from the AFL Tasmania. Are you aware of the AFL lacking in supporting community football in other states? Is this something that happens in other states?

Mr HAYWOOD - I am not aware.

Mr ATKINS - No idea. I went this year to the carnival in Western Australia and spoke to some of their people and they get pretty good support over there and they get a fair say in how it can be distributed and what can be done with it. While here there is no say whatsoever.

Mr LYONS - They have a commission and the licences through the AFL teams. It is a different model. We have over 2 000 registered players. Those people pay a lot of tax and \$500 000, that's not much money. If a significant increase in that grant to football for junior development and things like netball facilities, our clubs struggle for facilities as well and that would be a facility grant program and netball incorporated in that possibly. That would make a significant difference to clubs in terms of making a community facility. Some of these small towns, like Bridgenorth, the only thing at Bridgenorth is the football ground.

Laughter.

Mr LYONS - Even Bracknell. There are a few houses. There is a community facility, there is not a town hall. All I am saying is, it is the centre of the community and to get a community grant for that and even for a netball court would be a big improvement. Even Bracknell, to put some additional state government resources into those facilities would be a big help so \$500 000 is not much money. I keep saying that.

Mr BEST - That is a great idea, that concept that you have put forward about the sharing of the netball and the football and so forth. Given that Hawthorn is the Tasmanian team, as well as it is the Hawthorn's team. Doesn't that then say to the AFL that there is some onus to support football here even more so because we are more regional than other states?

Mr LYONS - Hawthorn put \$150 000 in. Hawthorn is a reasonable model for Tasmania. We've got 500,000 people, split into three distinct shires that don't talk. This is the problem with state league, in my opinion. People won't travel. It's impossible to get people to travel.

Mr BEST - Do you think there's then more of an onus for the AFL to be even more supportive? At the moment, you're telling us, and we're hearing this in evidence, there's really not much happening as you filter down. In some ways it is because we're in a situation where, okay, we're being told it's going to be very difficult for us to have our own team, but because we are joint owners of a team in some ways, there should be more evidence that it is filtering down. In support of the money, do you think there's more onus on the AFL, that they should be supporting more?

Mr LYONS - I haven't gone into the precise details of how they spend the money. My understanding is they're putting money into clubs to do junior development or to appoint junior development officers, and I understand those clubs have them.

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Mr HARRISS - TSL clubs.

Mr LYONS - Yes, state league clubs. If you put \$50 000 to 10 clubs, there's not much left out of your \$500 000. What they do in terms of contact with our clubs, our clubs say is very limited.

CHAIR - I want to go to the AFL's support of the NTFA. Since withdrawing of the funding and support in relation to the umpires and coaches, what is AFL Tasmania providing for the NTFA at this present time? What did you get from AFL Tasmania?

Mr LYONS - Nothing.

CHAIR - Nothing at all?

Mr LYONS - No.

Mr ATKINS - If there is a problem above us, an appeals problem, people can go over us and appeal to them. As far as anything else, we don't get -

CHAIR - I was going to get onto the TFC next, and you've covered that in your submission.

Mr HAY - I really wanted to bring that up.

CHAIR - There's been evidence given to this committee that AFL Tasmania were wanting to delegate some of their responsibilities back to the TFC. Where is the TFC going, what discussions has it had with AFL Tasmania in relation to receiving any of the responsibilities of AFL Tasmania? Are they fitted out or equipped to take responsibility for any of those requirements?

Mr HAY - Certainly not. We've been there from the start. We're set up. They're purely and simply to facilitate representative football, whether it be under-23s going interstate to play with the Australian Football Council, and bring back the SFL-NTFL-NTFA rep matches each year. Then, all of a sudden, Mr Wade knocks on the door and wants the TFC. We reported in 2010 that the TFC should probably be able to manage and control all facets of football in the state under the state league, yet offering no resources. There was never anything offered there. This has been going since 2010 and there was one constitution thrown away. There's a new one now, which I mentioned in there -

CHAIR - That you're not happy with?

Mr HAY - No. Because all of a sudden our board members can be paid, employ staff, and you can't change a constitution without AFL Tasmania's permission, setting up a separate company to do it. It scares me.

CHAIR - Who would have been funding those positions - AFL Tasmania?

Mr HAY - We're still not down to that yet. It hasn't come out as yet.

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CHAIR - So what they're wanting to do then is just create another tier to manage these areas?

Mr HAY - Like I said, why do we need another tier of football administration? We don't.

CHAIR - Where is that at the present time?

Mr HAY - We had a meeting in July. This constitution - I have now called it a 'commission' - was, I think, drafted by the AFL in Victoria. This then came to a meeting in July and Madeleine Ogilvie, the vice-president of the SFL, was to go back and redraft it and then come to us, but we haven't heard another thing.

CHAIR - Since July of this year?

Mr HAY - Yes, since July. We don't know where we are at with it. Did we hear something the other night about the TFC becoming involved in the Devonport licence? It could have been on the news.

Mr LYONS - It was on the television.

CHAIR - So the Tasmanian Football Council still continues at this stage and it has not at this stage picked up any of the delegated responsibilities from AFL Tasmania that have been spoken about?

Mr HAY - Not that the NTFA know of.

Mr GUTWEIN - Geoff, you were talking about the NEFU and the linkages they have with netball and other things, but also the comment was made more broadly that you have a working relationship with them and you are doing some things now for the NEFU such as working with them with rostering, tribunals and other administrative support. I have had a bit to do with NEFU clubs in recent times and they certainly have no fear of working with the NTFA. In fact a number are knocking on the door.

Mr LYONS - We told clubs there to stay and have the accepted clubs. The only club we have accepted recently from there is when the north-east requested that we take a club.

Mr ANDERSON - We probably threw that offer out to them a couple of years ago that we would help with administration and those sort of things. It is only as of 2014 that they have accepted and said that they do need some help.

Mr GUTWEIN - That makes the point that I was coming to. It appears that you have a reasonable working relationship with the NEFU, certainly from feedback that I am getting from members.

Mr LYONS - We want their clubs to keep going and we will do what we can to facilitate that.

Mr ANDERSON - And in their own identity and not as a part of us, if at all possible. It will still be the NEFU as we all know it.

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Mr GUTWEIN - Coming then to the Tasmanian Football Council, and football more broadly across the state, you are working with that lower tier organisation and there seems to be a reasonable and cordial arrangement there. Why isn't that occurring with the state league, or should it be through the Tasmanian Football Council, because it appears to me that certainly any changes that are made to any particular association, whether it be the NEFU in regard to the number of teams, or the statewide league in regard to the number of teams, there are flow-on consequences for leagues in the same geographical location that those changes may have. How do you get a better relationship with AFL Tasmania or with the state league? Is the Tasmanian Football Council the vehicle for that and do you want a better relationship? The thing that appears to me is that you are taking a strategic approach here in the north in regard to the NEFU and the way that you interact as an NTFA, but with the league above you is that strategic approach happening, should it be happening and how would you best see it working?

Mr LYONS - We have no real formal arrangement with the state league clubs in this area. Obviously some of our people have some links but we don't have a formal relationship because they are in a separate competition.

Mr GUTWEIN - Is that the same with the NEFU, though? You would have no formal arrangements but would you have a working arrangement?

Mr LYONS - No. We meet with them and we talk to them and we have a relationship with them, but we don't have that. For instance, a few years ago we offered to have a dual registration thing. We wrote to the three clubs and the three clubs wrote back to us and said that they didn't want it. AFL Tasmania said they now want dual registrations but we haven't got a formal proposal on that so that is up in the air and it hasn't been finalised. We are not going to do it because the AFL impose it on a state league club. State league clubs want to have a deal that is acceptable to the NTFA. For instance, we don't want to have Joe Blogs from Old Scotch playing with Prospect Storm and then when he doesn't get a game being forced to go to the Tamar Cats. We want to have a relationship that allows players to go back to their club of origin. That was talked about with AFL Tasmania a couple of years ago and we haven't got any further submissions or proposals on that.

Mr GUTWEIN - That comes back to the premise of my question. Is the Tasmanian Football Council supposed to be that intermediary between yourselves and the AFL, and if it is not should there be some intermediary or a mechanism put in place? It appears to me that any changes in any particular league will have flow-on consequences to other leagues. If the NEFU is weakened or strengthened that will have an impact on the NTFA and if the NTFA is weakened or strengthened that will have an impact on both the NEFU and the state league clubs. How do you put in place that mechanism?

Mr ATKINS - Peter, probably the best way is more communication from the top level all the way down. From our submission and what has been said, there is no communication. The only communication, as Greg said, was, 'We will do this and you can't do that'. There is never any discussion. 'You cannot appoint someone to the board unless we give you permission. You can't do this unless we give you permission. You'll take who we tell you you will take or there won't be anyone.' So we need to have better communication - exactly what we are doing around this table. People have to start to listen to one another and work together.

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Mr LYONS - The Tasmanian Football Council was formed in the Deloraine Hotel with the NTFL and the NTFA. Certainly in my mind at that time was that the NTFL was going back to six teams and, to my mind, it was let us get combined footy up because six teams playing each other, four games against each team, to me it seemed like having combined games would really help the NTFL competition. There might have been other motivations around but that is what I thought it was about, bearing in mind what Darrel Baldock used to say that after combined footy the players are better in their home club. In those days, of course, the south played the north-west and the NTFA and then they had a state team, so there was always three combined games every year back in those times. That was where it came from. It was about getting combined footy, and then the amateur under-23 thing came up, so we went with the state. It was about getting the associations to play combined footy, in my mind, but it might have been something else in other people's minds.

Now it has progressed. We have a potential constitution and we are not even an incorporated body; we are three incorporated bodies, I understand, trading as the Tasmanian Football Council. We need to get that legal aspect done and sorted. It has taken some time. We have put it in the hands of many people over a few years and it hasn't quite happened, but at least we have a bit of paper now and it has my scrawl all over it, but we needed to do some amendments. From an NTFA point of view, we are not happy for the AFL to provide a person to come in, for instance, and run the NTFA, or be involved with us, if they are paid by AFL Tasmania, because we know that whoever pays the piper gets the tune. If we are getting a direct grant for footy then it needs to come to us and we need to employ the person, because if you are going to run any organisation, it doesn't matter what it is, we should be managing it at the lowest possible level where people have full information. If you are going to put money into any organisation, you should put it where the people are and the people know what is going on, provided they have full information.

Mr HARRISS - I note that AFL Tasmania seems to have secured some sponsorship through WorkSafe Tasmania and \$54 000 in total is fed out to the SFL, NTFA and NTFL.

Mr HAY - Yes, \$18 000 each.

Mr HARRISS - Are you aware of what the total WorkSafe sponsorship is that AFL Tasmania has secured?

Mr HAY - No. There was always mention that they were giving us \$18 000, and the NTFL and the SFL \$18 000, and keep about \$60 000 to themselves, I believe.

Mr BOOTH - \$60 000?

Mr HAY - I think so but I'm not too sure. I think there was some money set aside for netball, too. I know in the first year netball didn't get any but I don't know about the second year.

Mr HARRISS - That being the case, the fact that AFL Tasmania is at the moment, through that sponsorship, feeding some finance into the regional league administration and association, is AFL Tasmania proposing financial support to the Tasmanian Football

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Council if it is restructured in accordance with the constitution which AFL Tasmania is suggesting?

Mr HAY - It would have to. There is no way in the world that it could be funded any other way.

Mr HARRISS - Am I right, then, in further understanding that it would be AFL Tasmania's intention to essentially manage the Tasmanian Football Council in the event that the constitution is accepted and they provide ongoing funding?

Mr HAY - I would think so, yes.

Mr HARRISS - Which takes me to my final question. In your submission you have indicated that at an earlier time the NTFA sought a bit higher level contribution from AFL Tasmania to your administration, but you were essentially told something to the effect that if you are expecting some support from the current general manager or whatever his title now is, Shaun Young, then the expectation of AFL Tasmania would be that he would either take control of the running of the NTFA, or his services, as up till then were being provided a little, would be entirely withdrawn?

Mr HAY - Yes.

Mr LYONS - This is before my time in the NTFA. These guys know exactly what happened with that and maybe they could explain it.

Mr ANDERSON - A couple of people were pushing it at the time. That was their idea, that they would come in. He was to be originally an understudy to myself or my position. Obviously their agenda was that whoever the person was, and at that time it was Shaun Young, would gradually move in and push the volunteers, as we all are, aside and take the reins, which we didn't think was the right thing to do. We have all been around a long time, we know how our clubs operate and we just didn't think that even our clubs would accept something like that. So nothing become of it.

Mr HARRISS - Shaun at the time was a paid employee of AFL Tasmania?

Mr ANDERSON - He was.

Mr HARRISS - So it could have been contended that AFL Tasmania would say they were by that process contributing to the management and administration of the NTFA?

Mr ANDERSON - They would have been their thoughts, yes.

Mr BOOTH - It seems like there is pretty serious difficulties in terms of communicating with the AFL. Is that a cultural thing of the AFL or do you think they are just disinclined to engage with the other football bodies?

Mr HAY - They are totally interested in their state league and now the Tasmanian Football Council, more so than worrying about an NTFA or an NTJFA.

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Mr BOOTH - Do you think they are disinclined or incapable of communicating, or it is actually a policy thing, a strategy?

Mr HAY - 'Disinclined' is probably the right sort of word.

Mr LYONS - Their focus is on getting draft picks and getting the state league going and getting elite footy happening. They seem to get their two, three or four drafted each year, which, I guess, is the purpose of the AFL, and they need players.

Mr BOOTH - Is that detrimental to football generally across all the groups?

Mr LYONS - You have to have people wanting to play the game, and the elite is where people support it.

Mr ATKINS - Yes, but that doesn't seem to be happening at the moment. With the elite, you are getting not a lot of people to the football, and we have what they call 'grassroots' football and we are probably getting more. I think the biggest thing is communication. We have to get back to talking. We are all here for the one thing; we want to see football continue in Tasmania. It is a fantastic sport and we want to see it. It doesn't matter if a kid is only good enough to play third grade; you should treat him the same. We took kids away to Western Australia for the first time since 1967, but as far as I am aware there has not been one thing back from AFL Tasmania to say congratulations. They are under-23 kids.

South improved this year. They won a premiership and it was fantastic for South, but have a look at where some of those kids came from that helped them to improve this year. There was a kid from Lilydale and a kid from Rocherlea. Grassroots do a lot and not every kid wants to play at the top level for one reason or another. He could be studying, he has a girlfriend in a different area, but sooner or later he has to be given that chance if he wants to do it. To say that you won't pick a kid in a state team if he doesn't play at the top level, is rubbish. If a kid is good enough you should pick him. We took a kid away to Western Australia who had just turned 16 and plays with Wynyard. He played in the under-23s. That kid was good enough to go so we took him and gave him a chance to do it. If he ends up playing with Devonport next year or Burnie and makes the state team, why shouldn't he have been good enough if he was still playing with Wynyard?

Mr BOOTH - I was wondering whether communication is a CEO problem.

Mr ATKINS - We are not here to shoot people.

CHAIR - I think they are not happy with him - very clearly.

Mr LYONS - Scott Wade has a job to do and he does that. He is obviously funded by the AFL. If you go around the suburbs of Launceston and say, 'Who's the most disliked?', you would probably have Demetriou and Scott Wade, but if you asked those people what is a specific problem, they will say he has taken footy to the south or he is too Hobart-eccentric. People can say what they like but I think if the state government focused on

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putting more money into facilities and opportunities for people to be playing the game then that would be a far greater result than chasing Scott Wade.

CHAIR - Geoff, we couldn't even get any funding from them for the Rocherlea Football Club rooms, but I had better steer clear of that.

Mr BEST - Sports funding, departmental funding, is usually very targeted. No matter which discipline of sport, it is always really targeted about participation and getting people involved. Do you feel that in some ways the sponsorship that is being provided here, and the \$500 000 specifically perhaps, is a bit too open in that regard?

Mr LYONS - It is inadequate for a start.

Mr HAY - We don't know the terms of reference that that is given. I would assume that it has been signed off and -

CHAIR - I was just going to go into the terms of reference for that funding or what the state government is buying from AFL Tasmania, for want of a better way of putting it. There are the eight criteria or focus points: participation programs, coach and official education/development, governance initiatives, communication, marketing and promotion, club development, inclusive participation, and ethics/slash harassment-free sport. They are the eight focus areas for AFL Tasmania coming from the \$500 000 that they receive from the state government each year. They are the areas to address. You refer in your submission to the accreditation of the 62 sports trainers over the last two years. You are saying that financial assistance in this area would be greatly appreciated. Are you saying that AFL Tasmania provides nothing towards any of that at all?

Mr HAY - No, they don't provide us with any funding at all to that sort of thing, but they do have their own sports medicine seminars et cetera, to do the same thing as we are doing.

Mr LYONS - And Hawthorn do some of that as well with AFL Tasmania.

Mr BEST - You were starting to say that you didn't think there were any terms attached to the funding and it wasn't specific?

Mr HAY - I presume there would have been terms attached to the funding and they would have been signed off and audited over the years anyway.

Mr LYONS - The Department of Sport and Recreation would have done that, the state government auditors would have done that and the AFL auditors would have done it.

Mr BEST - The amount seems inadequate.

Mr LYONS - What do you get for \$50 000?

Mr BEST - You are not getting support for your umpires?

Mr LYONS - No.

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Mr ATKINS - If you look at our submission, the biggest thing maybe is the lack of communication. I know it is a problem in most businesses and in most things that you do. We are not here to kick anybody; we are here to try to make things better for grassroots football and develop the best kids we can in this state, but we need to do that as a whole unit, not as separate little identities running all over the place.

CHAIR - The committee appreciates the fact that you include recommendations and issues that the committee will take on board in putting their report together at the end of this process.

Mr HAY - One thing I probably didn't put in there was that the NTFA make that available to the NTJFA for all their meetings, tribunals and anything else free of charge, so we are also helping in that respect, so I suppose we are helping the NTJFA and the NEFU.

CHAIR - A very respected organisation - the NTFA.

Mr LYONS - We look forward to the additional funding for facilitates for our local clubs and I hope that is one of your recommendations.

CHAIR - Thank you all very much for your attendance.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr KELVIN HAYES AND Mr DANIEL SMEDLEY, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PROSPECT HAWKS FOOTBALL CLUB, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Dean) - Welcome. This is a public hearing and the public is able to be here and it will be disseminated to the public. It will be recorded on *Hansard* and it will be available to anybody who wants it at a later stage. Here you have parliamentary privilege in giving your evidence. You are protected in anything that you say, but once you leave this environment you no longer have that protection.

Mr HAYES - The first involvement I had in football was when my children starting playing. When I was young I never played, unfortunately, partly because I wasn't good enough and I worked on dairy farms so I was always milking cows. When both my children wanted to play football I got involved with the local club, which was Beaconsfield at that stage, and later Beauty Point in the old Tamar league, which some of you may remember. From there I departed from football because my son didn't wish to be serious about it. He just wanted to go and have fun, which was fine, but my daughter wished to be serious about her sport and she progressed into another sport, which I followed here into. I was involved in that sport for 40 years or roundabout.

When my grandson started playing at Prospect in 2003, I went to watch him play and the following year I got involved with the Prospect club, which was then known as the Sharks. There were some problems with that club at that stage. There was some misappropriation of funds et cetera that was clearly and easily identifiable, so having a long background in sport administration my wife put my hand up to help out at the club. I did that and we followed on from there and did our best to improve the club. We got Daniel on board in about 2004. We have progressed from there.

Mr SMEDLEY - I have been involved with football for many seasons and have previously been the state development manager for AFL Tasmania. I haven't been employed by AFL Tasmania since the end of 2008, but I do work for AFL Tasmania in a consultancy role, and I think that is pretty well known.

In relation to Prospect, and obviously we are here to talk about community football, I was involved as the state development manager in the genesis of the Prospect Junior Football Club in 2002. At the end of 2004 I was asked, as the state development manager, to provide some assistance to the club after an approach from Kelvin. Subsequently I became an independent chairperson of the first instance where it became its own separate entity, which was at the start of the 2005 season - so at the end of 2004. I remained an independent chairperson for a number of seasons. I became a volunteer at the club almost immediately and continue as a volunteer right through to the current day. I am involved with the club as a volunteer on both committees of the junior and the senior club.

I am not involved with the new state league program that they are starting to develop. I am not on the board of that but I am certainly assisting the club as a volunteer. I am a life member of the junior football club and obviously have been very committed to developing the programs in that area.

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Mr HAYES - I don't have any real problems with the way that football is set up in Tasmania at present. As I indicated, I come from a background in other sports, being involved right up to national level in other sports, one of them an Olympic sport. The structure that is currently in place in football is, to my mind, probably superior to a lot of other sports. For a start, we don't pay any fee whatever to AFL Tasmania - and I am speaking as a senior resident - or AFL nationally. In most other sports, you pay to administer the sport at a state level and at a national level, so of course that comes back down to your players who are paying that fee. I guess that is because in the way football is set up it is fairly fortunate that they don't need to do that. They are able to gain funding from other sources, namely the media et cetera. The structure is quite sound.

I think the biggest problem we have is that we are all human and a couple of the greater human failings are stupidity and greed, and I have as much as anyone in that manner. What local, community football needs to recognise is what they are and what they need to do. I believe they need to get their mind on what they need to do rather than worry about what AFL Tasmania does. The NTFA, in our case, runs our local competition and I think they have a good, sound competition. We don't actually pay a fee but every home game day, of course, we have fees you have to pay to the NTFA, which cover things like umpires, insurance and that kind of thing.

Mr GUTWEIN - The club that you are talking about is division 2 in the NTFA - Prospect?

Mr HAYES - Yes.

Mr GUTWEIN - And you are the president of that senior club?

Mr HAYES - Yes. From my point of view as club president, I don't expect AFL Tasmania to provide me with any money as such. I expect that they would do what they do, which is fund courses that we send people to - trainers, umpires, coaches - supporting our club in that way.

CHAIR - Have AFL Tasmania been funding those courses?

Mr HAYES - We pay for a course, but they put the courses on. They would provide some funding and they would provide personnel to provide those courses. As far as I am aware, that is the way it normally works.

CHAIR - So you are like the other clubs. You pay to have a person on an umpires coaching session or what have you, for accreditation and so on. Is that how it happens?

Mr HAYES - For accreditation, yes.

CHAIR - You pay a certain amount to AFL Tasmania per person to participate?

Mr HAYES - Yes. AFL Tasmania sets the courses up and so on. That is a cost they bear.

CHAIR - In what other way does AFL Tasmania give your club support?

Mr HAYES - More in the way of moral support. For instance, if we wish to write to the council to say that we need this upgraded at the ground - and not only the council, but

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also state and federal governments - then we would ask for their support. We would write a letter and even the council will ask for our support if they want to write to the government for funding. They will ask for our support to get funding to upgrade the venues and so on. That is one of the ways that they assist us.

Mr GUTWEIN - Your club is a member of the NTFA, isn't it?

Mr HAYES - Yes.

Mr GUTWEIN - I am just trying to understand why AFL Tasmania would be supporting your club in division 2 of the NTFA.

Mr HAYES - Because we ask.

Mr GUTWEIN - What about the NTFA; do they support you as well or not?

Mr HAYES - I am not aware of that.

Mr SMEDLEY - I am not sure what you are asking.

Mr GUTWEIN - Kelvin just said that the AFL provide moral support, and if there are funding requests or you need assistance with the council or whatever that the AFL assists. I am just trying to understand where the NTFA sits in there, as you are actually a member of the NTFA as a club.

Mr SMEDLEY - The NTFA has a council of clubs and its board - a lot bigger number of stakeholders.

Mr GUTWEIN - Do they provide that same sort of support or not?

Mr HAYES - They haven't done, no.

Mr GUTWEIN - Have they been asked?

Mr HAYES - We always discuss things with them but normally the council asks us what support we can offer. We offer what we think -

Mr GUTWEIN - It would be AFL Tasmania that would back you on those sorts of requests, as opposed to the NTFA?

Mr HAYES - Yes.

Mr SMEDLEY - The AFL has funding for any facility development; is that what you're angling at?

Mr GUTWEIN - No, I am just trying to understand and maybe I have misunderstood.

Mr SMEDLEY - The biggest issue for Prospect quite clearly is the facilities. The Prospect Park sports grounds are significant and there are thousands of users there, yet they have been shut down for the whole of August because of rain. So there are some massive

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drainage issues there that need to be addressed, and lighting issues as well. The only way that we can leverage money out of federal, state and local government is to get the support of the AFL, if possible, as well.

Mr GUTWEIN - Right, and what about the support of the NTFA; that is not a part of it?

Mr SMEDLEY - The NTFA has no money to put towards facilities, but the AFL does.

Mr GUTWEIN - But what about moral support as a member club?

Mr SMEDLEY - It is imperative. We have been fortunate that we have had no games cut out in August of NTFA football. It is lucky that it ends at the start of August, but we have regularly lost NTJFA football games there. It has cost of thousands of dollars because we can't get on the field. We have probably lost in the last three seasons approximately \$10 000 in revenue because we can't access the fields. We are not unique.

Mr GUTWEIN - Okay, but we haven't heard from other clubs that have said they have the backing of AFL, as opposed to their own association.

Mr SMEDLEY - For facilities?

Mr GUTWEIN - Yes.

Mr SMEDLEY - That's not true.

Mr GUTWEIN - We haven't heard; that is what I have said. We might get to that but I am just trying to understand what the AFL's involvement is.

Mr SMEDLEY - I think the AFL has tipped in money here and at Blundstone and at Kingborough and Devonport. It is on the public record.

Mr HAYES - Some of that comes from my background. Normally we would go straight to the state body and say, 'Give us a hand here. We want to write a letter to the council and get some funding' for an event or something we want to run. Possibly some of that has come from my side because I was president of the northern association so I would go straight to a state association. The NTFA, I am sure, would be prepared to give that moral support as well. Maybe we have been remiss in not asking for it, but that is what has happened.

Mr SMEDLEY - I am a volunteer at Prospect. I have two young boys who are at Auskick age. I have been involved with the Auskick junior programs, the youth programs and the senior programs as well, so that is my role. I have coached there and have done umpiring when required with the junior games as well, so I have been heavily involved.

The reason we started the football programs is that, as you would all be aware, it is probably the highest growth area in northern Tasmania - up in that belt, the south-west of the city and into the Meander Valley. Since 2005, when we incorporated the junior football club, we have provided cumulative opportunities to around about 2 300 players to be involved in the game on an annual basis. That is a significant achievement. At that point in time, we only had an under 11 and under 12 team to start with, so around about

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40 players. We provide opportunities for over 300 players in junior football each year and have a pathway from Auskick right through every age group.

We have been able to build it up and it has come about because of the support of the Meander Valley Council in particular in providing that facility and opening up and continuing development there. There have been a number of government initiatives from state, local and federal levels to support that development. The facility has grown and as a result more and more young people in that community have turned to Australian football rather than soccer. If we had not started to provide programs in there then there would be massive numbers of soccer players in that area, which would be good for soccer and there are still hundreds of them there, but we are very happy that lots of young people are choosing to play Australian football.

We actually have graduates from our programs who are playing in the Tasmanian State League, the Northern Regional under-18 program, the NTFA division 1 and division 2, the North Eastern Football Union, and the Leven competition. We have players representing the Launceston Football Club, the North Launceston Football Club and the South Launceston Football Club at senior level, and the great majority of community football clubs in other competitions. Initially they were dispersing, which is the reason we created the senior football program as well, so that young people could continue to play in the Prospect area if they had grown up as young Prospect people. That has been quite successful and it is starting to grow.

We have players representing Tasmania at senior level. In 2012 Tasmanian senior team, two players who had started at Prospect represented Tasmania. We have had regular representatives at the under 18 and under 16 level. We had eight this season who represented Tasmania at the under 18 and under 16 levels.

We hope to see Kade and Jake Kolodjashnij, local players who played all their junior football with Prospect, drafted to the AFL on 21 November, which will be a great thing for the club and provide a role model and encouragement to all other young players to continue in Australian football.

We have spent over \$1 million ourselves, which has been fund-raised by parents, supporters and sponsors, over the course of that decade in developing footballers and football programs in the area, so that is significant.

CHAIR - Has AFL Tasmania contributed or supported you in all of this?

Mr SMEDLEY - We have received further support from various levels of government, particularly in relation to infrastructure development, and also from the AFL in relation to game development and resources. All those funds have been fully acquitted. They have been used for the purpose they were allocated - which is game development. I will reinforce what Kelvin said. The cost of participating in the NTJFA and the NTFA in respect of the state governing body is very affordable. We have a \$5 fee for each junior player to play in the NTJFA to help with their administrative costs, but there are no other charges to us for programs and support, and there are no charges from the NTFA in relation to administration or support that they provide. Obviously there are some hard costs - they have insurance and umpires and those things - so in that sense it is very

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affordable. We, like every club, are constantly fund-raising and chasing sponsorship and government support to achieve our objectives.

We have received support from AFL Tasmania predominantly in relation to development, support and advice. Obviously, we have large numbers of young players, so they are readily able to provide us with game development support, which is personnel or resources available through the AFL that have come down through the system. Upon start-up, the club did receive some support, football resources, to help us with the start-up. There are qualified personnel who have always been available for coaching or promotional visits and that has been a help to us over the years as well.

Mr GUTWEIN - Your names appear in a submission so it is only fair ask you some questions about that. There were some issues raised and I would like to read you part of a submission.

Mr SMEDLEY - From?

Mr GUTWEIN - From Phil Thurlow this morning. He raised some issues and commented broadly about AFL Tasmania's involvement in community football.

Mr SMEDLEY - In relation to which club?

Mr GUTWEIN - This was in relation to your involvement with both Prospect and South. I think it is only fair to give you the opportunity to hear what was put, but then you might like to consider the *Hansard* at a later date and come back and make a further submission. Included in the submission is this, and I will read it to you:

In South Launceston's case what AFL Tasmania did was plain wrong and made no business sense. Firstly, they didn't honour their commitment through their own licence agreement to keep an eye on the club to ensure they were financially viable. They let the South Launceston Football Club down here.

Secondly, when they had concerns on South's finances they appointed and additionally funded the CEO, Mr Daniel Smedley, who had previously established the Prospect junior club. From this point forward, the South Launceston Football Club had a CEO who was involved with the Prospect Club and has now taken over the South Launceston Football Club licence. Many decisions that were made whilst running the South club seemed to have been made to also benefit Prospect, i.e. the South Prospect merger arrangement in NTFA. No longer after 30 years would South field an under-16 team; players were sent to Prospect.

He goes on but the broad thrust of this, in fact his final comment, is -

My belief is that Daniel was distracted in his decision-making to resurrect the South Launceston Football Club because of his involvement with Prospect. This may have been to the detriment of the South Launceston Football Club.

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There was some discussion about that this morning and it appears in one of the submissions, so if you want to make comment on that today I think it is only fair that we raise it. If you want to have a look at what was said publicly then you can come back and respond to us and that is your right as well. I don't want to sandbag you.

Mr HAYES - I will answer that from my point of view. If I had any doubt whatever that Daniel Smedley could not objectively act in different situations in the interests of the entity that he was representing, he wouldn't be on my board - and with integrity, I might add.

From our point of view as a club, you asked why we wouldn't ask the NTFA. We have had nothing but problems and jealousy with both governing bodies, the NTJFA and the NTFA, over our journey. First, we were not taken seriously and then people became jealous because we managed to be successful. On numerous occasions we have been accused of having funding from AFL Tasmania. I can guarantee we have not received a single dollar in funding from AFL Tasmania, nor have we asked for it. We follow the processes that every club should afford themselves - applying for grants that are available. There are many kinds of grants available - government grants, local community grants - and we access those grants. We apply for those grants and if we are successful that is great, a bonus to us.

With regard to what any other club says about Prospect, Daniel Smedley is a great resource for football in general, and if any other club came to him with a request he would do his best to help that club. I can guarantee that, and he would have the blessing of the Prospect club to do that. I am a bit sick and tired of people trying to put our club down and put Daniel Smedley down because he goes and does a job that he is employed to do and is accused of somehow conniving to get Prospect an advantage by doing that job. I am absolutely and utterly fed up with it.

I actually wanted to contact Phil Edwards some months ago when this thing with South first came up. Daniel said, 'No, don't do that. Just let it short itself out.' What was being said was clearly inaccurate. Prospect has never had any intention of merging with any other club and as long as I am involved we will never have any intention of merging with any other club. We are a Prospect club and that is the way we will stay. It was widely reported that we were going to merge with South, and we had until recently a joint venture with South Launceston, which has now been dissolved. We had no problems or no questions with South. They did what they could do to help us and we did what we needed to do to get the job done, so there were no problems there.

Mr SMEDLEY - In relation to Phil's points of view, obviously he is representing the Launceston Football Club and they would have their own reasons for making such statements.

Mr GUTWEIN - He was actually here as an individual. He didn't come to represent the club.

Mr SMEDLEY - No, but he is a life member of the club and heavily involved, and his son has been drafted from that club to the AFL. He is with the Launceston Football Club. They and Phil would have his own reasons for putting those points of view, but without going through the whole document I really can't say.

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In relation to the South Launceston Football Club, though, as a person who was asked by AFL Tasmania to provide consultancy support, I could only say that I have provided every possible support, over and above what would be reasonable from any person who is working in the capacity I was. I have acted as a volunteer. My wife and I are members and my wife has volunteered for the club. Over the course of the last few seasons I have sponsored the club as an individual so I don't think that any comments from Phil Thurlow would be particularly across all the issues at South Launceston or have the sorts of insights that you would need to have in relation to that club unless you are actually inside the club. I think he is talking as an outsider about those issues and I think he is incorrect.

CHAIR - On that, AFL Tasmania asked that you become involved and employed you in the form of a consultancy?

Mr SMEDLEY - The South Launceston Football Club board took up an opportunity to receive some extra support.

CHAIR - So they approached you?

Mr SMEDLEY - No, they were asked by AFL Tasmania if they required extra support and they were offered extra support.

CHAIR - So AFL Tasmania then employed you on a set sum or salary? How did that occur?

Mr SMEDLEY - I work as a consultant for AFL Tasmania and receive a fee. As part of that arrangement AFL Tasmania offered my support to the club, which was duly provided over the course of two-and-a-half seasons.

CHAIR - Do you perceive that there might have been a conflict of interest in your involvement with the Sharks at Prospect and then your involvement with South Launceston?

Mr SMEDLEY - Not at all. They were in a joint venture before that occurred.

CHAIR - They didn't see that as an issue at all?

Mr SMEDLEY - They were engaged in a joint venture before I became involved with South Launceston in a formal sense. In that sense, they were working together collaboratively already. They already had an agreement to share players, fund an NTFA program collaboratively, and also to share grounds. When you say 'conflict', what would be the conflict?

CHAIR - I suppose I could come up with a number of reasons, but I just put it to you in that form and you've said you did not perceive a conflict of interest.

Mr GUTWEIN - Can you understand that perception of the conflict of interest is there, whether or not there was a conflict of interest?

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Mr SMEDLEY - I can't see, if the clubs were already engaged in an arrangement where they were working together, there would have been a conflict of interest at the point I commenced.

Mr GUTWEIN - Certainly not at the point you commenced, but where we finish today.

Mr BOOTH - Retrospectively I suppose there is a question where the conflict of interest issue -

Mr SMEDLEY - Yes, it is good in hindsight to come up with a conflict, but at no point when we commenced activities did someone say there was a conflict of interest. In fact, South Launceston invited our involvement. You can't have it both ways.

Mr GUTWEIN - No, but in regard to comments this committee has heard today the perception exists that there was a conflict of interest. South Launceston is where South Launceston is and Prospect is where Prospect is at the moment. With the benefit of hindsight, at the moment in the general footballing public you can understand there is a perception of a conflict of interest.

Mr SMEDLEY - You will have to ask AFL Tasmania why it saw some benefits in having Prospect and South Launceston work together, which would probably be the reason that Launceston is a bit miffed as well.

Mr GUTWEIN - Why do you think Launceston might be a bit miffed?

Mr SMEDLEY - Prospect has created a golden zone, not through any work of South Launceston or Launceston, but through the work of Kelvin and all the other life members and volunteers who have gone into something where there was nothing at all. In the course of a decade we have created a football program that has provided an opportunity for hundreds of players, and two of them are going to be drafted to the AFL, we hope, later in the year and there will be many more to come. It is a golden zone for football. It is nothing to do with Daniel Smedley or Kelvin Hayes per se. The fact is there are many young families in the area who have an opportunity to play sport because of the work of council to provide a facility. As soon as you do that, there are thousands of people who go along and use the facility. It is nothing to do with Daniel Smedley or Kelvin Hayes as individuals. They have contributed, as have many other life members and volunteers. That is the reason - hard work.

CHAIR - On the consultancy, when did you assume that position with AFL Tasmania?

Mr SMEDLEY - As I mentioned at the start, it was back in 2008.

CHAIR - So you have been a consultant for AFL Tasmania?

Mr SMEDLEY - I have had a number of projects I have been working on with AFL Tasmania.

CHAIR - What are some of those projects? That has been a paid position to AFL Tasmania and this inquiry is about the funding that AFL Tasmania is provided. The state buys from AFL Tasmania a service and one of those services is to promote community

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football and 'returns to the community and provide a direct benefit to football at all levels in Tasmania and increase support for grassroots football'. In that regard, you have been there since 2008 and have identified certain projects. What were some of those projects?

Mr SMEDLEY - There is a project called the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame. I have been involved in that since I was an employee with AFL Tasmania. I have continued to undertake research and development of that program, which has been a very successful recognition program, not only for the elite level of football. It is more specifically targeted at community football as a whole. All community clubs and individuals who have supported community clubs over many decades have been recognised through that program. It is held in high esteem amongst the football community. Everyone I have spoken to considers it to be very important. I have been heavily involved in some of the AFL next generation funding rounds, assisting clubs to develop their funding applications. Some that have been successful include one at Devonport, where we have some lights up and running. There was some contribution from the AFL for that. There was also one at Glenorchy, where lights were also installed. That was also significantly funded by the AFL. There were a number of others I was involved in, helping develop those submissions.

I have been involved with work around the Tasmanian State League, particularly the record that was in place for a number of seasons - 2009, 2010 and 2011. I changed the format of that in 2012 and 2013 but that has been an ongoing project as well. That would be some of the key ones.

In the last couple of seasons I was asked to be involved, and South Launceston agreed, that we should provide some extra managerial support into that club and work closely with Ian Goninon, the president of that club, over the last couple of seasons to assist the club. That has been probably in many ways the toughest job.

CHAIR - So you have been hands-on with the South Launceston situation in moving it forward, out or whatever.

Mr SMEDLEY - I have been involved consulting with the club in the CEO capacity. There have been some changes at the club over the course of the last four months. There was a direction the members wished to take which was obviously not the same direction that AFL Tasmania wanted to take as far as the TSL licence in that part of the region goes.

Mr BEST - First of all, congratulations on your golden zone at Prospect and also for informing us about getting two players into the AFL.

I do not know the history about Prospect and South Launceston to that degree, being a Devonport boy and so forth. The evidence you provide suggests why can't there be these golden zones in these other areas. The other witnesses that have presented evidence just don't seem to have connection. Obviously you have the skills and you also seem to be fairly well connected with your consultancies and other things. I am interested why these golden zones are not happening elsewhere. We have heard this terrific story about what has happened at Prospect. How come you can get that support and yet we are hearing from other people saying, 'We just don't seem to be able to communicate with AFL Tasmania'?

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Mr SMEDLEY - This has not come about through the work of AFL Tasmania. It has come about through the work of the many parents and volunteers that have decided they want to support football in the area because they live in the area and they saw it as important. There wasn't any football there, Brenton, before 2011.

Mr BEST - I understand that but both of you have said today that you have had that support from AFL Tasmania. How come you have that support from AFL Tasmania and are able to have these discussions with AFL Tasmania? I appreciate the evidence you have provided, yet we are hearing from other witnesses that they just don't get to base one and are not able to have the same level of communication and discussion. I don't understand why that is.

Mr HAYES - Unfortunately, another human trait is negativity and the attitude of some people. Recently, I went to a meeting of club presidents. Only about three of the NTFA clubs weren't at that meeting. The attitude of the meeting was basically that the NTFA board was a bunch of no-hopers. My comment to them was, 'What do you do about it? Do you go to the AGM and put up candidates for the board?'. They said, 'No, not usually'. 'Then how can you say they are a bunch of idiots if you don't have any input to who is there? If you don't think they are right, you have to get candidates up and get them on the board.' It is apathy and sitting in your own little pond thinking about how hard done by you are without reaching out and trying to find something to help you. I am insulted, frankly - and it has happened since I've been involved with the Prospect Sharks, then becoming the Hawks - by the continual insinuation that somehow you are getting privileges that you shouldn't be getting.

Mr BEST - My line of questioning is not suggesting that. I don't understand why you have this communication, yet we are hearing from other witnesses that they are trying to communicate but can't. That seems to be coming through. You can't answer for other people, but I don't understand it.

Mr HAYES - I don't go for presidents, big nobs and all that sort; I am just another worker. If I have to clean the toilets, that is what I do. If you're the head of that organisation, surely you look for the best people to fill the positions in that organisation. That is what I constantly try to do.

Mr BEST - So if you had someone from AFL Tasmania on your board, or someone who has worked with AFL Tasmania, that may make a difference?

Mr HAYES - Our patron is Michelle O'Byrne. We target people we think may help the club. We have co-patrons - Michelle O'Byrne and the Meander Valley mayor. Surely that is the way you would do things if you want to be successful. Don't you find the best people to do the job?

Mr BOOTH - My next question is specifically to do with the development of community football, grassroots football, which is what the terms of reference are about. I was interested in the creation of the golden zone, which is an expression of success. How important in terms of attracting people to become engaged with this is geographical location? Prospect is a very high growth area with a lot of young families - a big customer base, if you like. Is that a big part of the mix? Is there a possibility that clubs that are a bit remote from that customer base or growth area are able to maintain their

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teams, or will you see this cycle of growth and change in demographics in a suburb and potentially the collapse of those teams because of the lack of community engagement and support? Can you transfer areas like the Prospect community to other areas if they didn't have the grounds and infrastructure?

Mr SMEDLEY - There should be a golden triangle between the northern Midlands - being Longford, South Launceston - being Youngtown, and Prospect. It's the golden triangle. If the dual carriageway goes through to Perth, that is going to create a population boom through that area and out through Hadspen. That will mean it'll become stronger in that area. That answers the question. Football will follow infrastructure and opportunity. It won't be the other way around; football doesn't create things in the community like infrastructure or jobs.

Mr BOOTH - That's the question I'm trying to get to, whether you can maintain community football, in areas that are going into decline, by people travelling into those areas or a local footy team located in the middle of your demographic.

Mr SMEDLEY - It's very hard. The north-east football union have been knackered by the fact there's a lot of industry, and if they can't get new industry into the area their football programs will continue to diminish and their clubs will not be able to survive.

Mr BOOTH - They're a fair way out, though. That would be a fair travelling distance from staying in Launceston.

Mr SMEDLEY - The Fingal team operates out of the Youngtown oval. It is looking to transfer all its games to Youngtown because its senior playing group is based in the city. I don't think any of the NEFU clubs are any different as far as the senior players are concerned. They have large numbers to move from the city to the country areas.

CHAIR - Thank you both for coming along.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr DALE FRASER, Mr ANDREW DOYLE AND Mr ARTHUR STOW, NTJFA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED, AND Mr GREG HAY WAS RE-EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Welcome, gentlemen. In this environment you have parliamentary privilege for any answers you provide. Once you leave here, that privilege no longer applies. It is a public hearing. If you want to give evidence in camera, for whatever reason, the committee will make a determination as to whether we should go into camera to take that evidence.

Mr FRASER - I am the chairman of the junior association and have been involved in the NTJFA for approximately three to four years. The representation you have here today is made up of the executive, so predominantly we manage the NTJFA under the rules, by-laws and constitution we have. That is where we fit in. The overview we have written sums it up. The NTJFA has 11 member clubs and approximately 1 600 kids who are registered to play. That excludes Auskick. There are Auskick players who are registered through affiliated clubs and some that are not. A lot of our clubs foster the Auskick programs but not in conjunction with the NTJFA.

Each club has a representative on the board, but from our point of view we are all independent members. There is an executive made up of independents and each club has a representative on the board. Currently we have a paid competition administrator, Greg Hay, to administer our operations. The administrator's role is to facilitate the daily operations of the competition, looks after rosters and ladders - a lot of the administrative things that take up a lot of time that the rest of us as volunteers don't have the time to do. We are affiliated to AFL Tasmania; we come under their laws and play under AFL rules.

Mr STOW - Ivan and I know each other. I was a past president of the junior footy club so he was directly involved with my time there. He was an umpire for us. With the football side of things, we have had a close association over a long time. I am the independent on the board and my role is to look after the football operations, which is administering the teams and the rules. I help to keep the roster going at the weekends. We all work together as an executive.

Mr DOYLE - I have been with the NTJFA on this executive for almost 12 months. I have boys involved in junior football so I have been involved through one of the clubs. I got involved with the under 9s and 11s for about three years and helped them run their competition.

CHAIR - I ask a general question. You are affiliated under the AFL. What support are you getting from AFL Tasmania at the present time? What is AFL Tasmania doing for you?

Mr FRASER - Not much. We get support from AFL. We had support this year, good support when we had a racial vilification issue that we needed some assistance with. That was handled very well through AFL. From a request to assist us with that in an area we were not comfortable in knowing how to deal with, their support was fantastic. Apart from that we really have not had much dialogue. They came and met at our board meeting twice this year. Nick Probert came and had a chat to us earlier in the season, just

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a chat and then we met. There was a fairly comprehensive list from their board - four or five representatives.

Mr STOW - In particular they were talking about their community football department, which we really had not heard of. I had not had direct dealings with any of those people. That probably happened midway this year. I am not saying they didn't have it. We just didn't have any involvement with them.

CHAIR - Have the AFL provided you with any financial support? Is there anything coming in that way? Expanding on that, what about the programs you run for accrediting your coaches, fitness people, medics and all of that? Do you get any support from AFL Tasmania in that regard?

Mr FRASER - No.

CHAIR - What is the position there?

Mr FRASER - Under our rules we want to have all our coaches as a minimum level I accredited. Sports trainers must be accredited. For every club, all the coaches need to be accredited, which we pay for. We put them through the course which AFL Tas run and the NTJFA pay for that. We get charged from AFL Tas to send members to that course that they run.

Mr BOOTH - In addition do you mean, or that is the charge?

Mr FRASER - There is a charge which we absorb. We expect our coaches to be level I accredited. AFL Tas conduct the courses which we send people to and then they bill us for that. We don't get any support. If anything, we are funding their operations.

Mr BOOTH - Is that a fee for service or a token fee?

Mr FRASER - Fee for service.

Mr GUTWEIN - Going back over 30 years ago when I was playing in the NTJFA, my mum and dad would take me to games and they would pay for my shorts and socks, buy me a pair of boots, plus we would have to pay a fee at the time to East Launceston Juniors. As a kid coming through, what has changed? What does AFL Tasmania bring to the table? If I were playing today, what would be different to what it was 30 years ago - apart from the fact that you have accredited coaches?

Mr STOW - They are the administrators of the junior development program for the high achievers.

Mr GUTWEIN - At what age does that kick in?

Mr STOW - Under 14 they do an identification. In under 15 they do it again and then they are selected in the state program. So the high-end achiever players - under 16 we are talking about now because that is the only category we deal up to - no longer play in junior footy. Through the policies of AFL Tas they now play - last year it was called the

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Colts. I think it is now called the 'development' series. They are the administrators of all the junior development programs and have been for a number of years now.

They were involved in helping us write our strategic plan about seven years ago. From that was one of those recommendations about the accreditation of coaches, so they did a strategic plan which ended last year, so there was some prior thing, but they do foster all the junior development programs -

Mr GUTWEIN - If I am a young player who has potential then I slide into one of those programs over the age of what?

Mr STOW - Fourteen.

Mr GUTWEIN - If I am a young player who doesn't have that potential?

Mr STOW - Nothing.

Mr GUTWEIN - So nothing has changed in that regard. With the junior development - and I note you have had meetings with the community football manager who addressed the board last year - what sort of services do they offer to you through the community football manager's program?

Mr STOW - Nothing.

Mr GUTWEIN - I noted here that the community football manager had addressed the board in 2013, but I think you had not had much contact before that.

Mr STOW - None at all.

Mr GUTWEIN - Nick Probert addressed the board. In addressing the board what programs or offering, if any, did he put?

Mr FRASER - When Nick first came along I can't even recall what we discussed. I think it was just a meet and greet.

Mr STOW - At mid-year they also proposed the forum at the casino. There was a forum at the casino to which the presidents are invited. Then there are different categories for development within your club, staff, and they have a volunteer of the year award.

Mr FRASER - I brought that with me.

Mr STOW - That is it. Dale has it as the president. That is an initiative of that community football development thing, but prior to this meeting there was basically no input at all.

Mr GUTWEIN - What benefit will come from that invitation?

Mr FRASER - I am not sure. One of the other discussions we had when they came through the year was talking about the under 16s and whether there was an opportunity for us to be able play under-16 games prior to some of the TSL games. Potentially they would want to have at least three games on the day, maybe four. They were trying to have at

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least three games on the day, so it was about whether we would be interested in building an under-16 game prior to state league games. We said that potentially we could be interested in that and we did set up a subcommittee that had a meeting with AFL Tasmania on that, with a few questions about how we would want to fit in. Bear in mind that a lot of our clubs' income is through people coming through the gate and buying things at the canteen, so if you were going to take them away from the club and send it to a state league venue, apart from having the opportunity to play on a good ground in front of a good crowd there would be costs involved for the club because they would be taking a game away from their normal day. We were asking a few questions about how that might be funded and we never actually got any further dialogue from that. They had one meeting and there has been no further dialogue, so I am not really sure where that is at. We haven't followed it because they were going to come back to us on it.

Apart from that, we don't get any financial support and haven't done for some time through AFL Tasmania. There was nothing last year.

Mr GUTWEIN - I note from reading the submission that there is no formal process for engagement with the AFL; would that be fair?

Mr FRASER - Yes.

Mr GUTWEIN - Should there be?

Mr FRASER - I think there should be. I think it should be state-wide coordination with all the junior groups. We've had some dialogue with the Southern Junior Football Club. The last couple of years we've had a few meetings with them. The last few years we've set up a north versus south under-16 game for the kids that are not involved in the higher level; ones that have been identified in a talent squad are excluded from that, so it's just under-16s playing under-16s. We've had some good dialogue in the past couple of years with Southern Football Tasmania, and shared some ideas about things they do and things we do.

What would be good is if there was a state-wide umbrella about junior football, where as a forum the south, north-west and north could share ideas. We want a similar playing field. For instance, if we rang up the north-west coast and said, 'Do you want a game of under-16 football', we'd be playing under the same rules. You'd be sharing the same ideas.

At the moment, there are clearly three different areas that are doing three different things that are similar. In essence, I think NTJFA has been its own identity since I've been involved with it, own identity with our own rules, trying to function on our own, financing ourselves, trying to look after ourselves, and not worry too much about AFL, because our feeling is they don't really worry about us.

CHAIR - I'm referring to your submission, Dale, and point three where you referred to, and I'll quote:

Approximately four years ago, AFL Tasmania put a resolution ultimatum to the association that AFL Tasmania take over the operation of the association. They wanted full control with no recourse for the control of

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the daily operations of the association under the NTJFA constitution/by-laws. This proposal was rejected by the board of the NTJFA, and AFL Tasmania withdrew their services.

From that statement, am I to accept that prior to that AFL Tasmania were providing some support to the junior association?

Mr FRASER - When I was first involved, and Arthur would have a better history on this than myself, we had our board meetings here. Shaun, under AFL, was the competition administrator. He assisted us with a lot of the things that Greg does today. That worked quite well. Then it got to a point where AFL came to us and said, 'What we'd like to do is run the competition, under your constitution and by-laws, but we'll make the decisions and our decisions will be final'. As a board we said we're not comfortable with that. We will continue to do it our way.

The following year, coincidental or whatever, Shaun's services weren't available to us anymore. He moved to Hobart, but there was no support for us to have anyone administering our competition. From there, we had to find somebody to employ someone.

CHAIR - That's when you employed the person in Greg's position, and Greg ended up in that position to do that for you?

Mr FRASER - Yes, but I'm not sure how long Shaun had been doing that role.

Mr STOW - We had no support initially, so we did the best we could. Shaun also had staff up here, so it wasn't just Shaun by himself. He offered his services; it was at the same time as the sporting poll system - the online ladders, registration, insurance, all those things that come under that banner; they helped in the process of getting that up. Now, you could look at how many games you've played, how many goals you've kicked, and the history's there for everyone. It's quite a good system. It took quite a while to get in and the juniors were probably one of the first, of all the associations, to put it on.

CHAIR - That's good. The reason I ask is that the funding provided to AFL Tasmania is for a number of reasons, but it's to drive significant economic and social returns to the community and provide a direct benefit to football at all levels in Tasmania, and increase support for grassroots football. That's the basis for this funding, hence the reason for these questions of the AFL involvement with the junior association now. That quote I've just made, you're saying that you're not getting that sort of support from AFL Tasmania?

Mr STOW - No. I didn't think that in their portfolio they were supposed to do that. I was under the impression, right or wrong, that when TSL started Shaun then became the operations manager of TSL footy; it was for the elite end of football and the elite end of junior development. We've always accepted that. That was the position I thought existed from day one. I never heard of this community football section until this year, about midway through the season.

Mr BOOTH - In your experience working with the AFL, it has been the AFL's way or the highway?

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Mr FRASER - I wouldn't say that because we haven't had to have that kind of conversation.

Mr BOOTH - Point three of the submission?

Mr FRASER - Sorry, in relation to that, yes. They wanted to run the competition in the way they wanted to do it, and there wasn't any negotiation on that, which we rejected as a board. We were comfortable with that rejection that we would prefer to run it as a board, than them take control of it, even under our rules. We wanted to run it ourselves.

Mr BOOTH - Would you say that junior football, in general, but excluding the NTJFA, were are the coalface of grassroots football?

Mr FRASER - Absolutely. We had under 9s, 10s and 11s, through to 16s, and that is where footy starts. I guess there is Auskick, but from those ages they start playing proper games and start to learn how to play football. They have coaches, all the things intended for kids to get better at their skills. Auskick is touch a football, have a play around; it's not a game as such, more an introduction to it.

Mr STOW - Our ethos is participation. We don't seek to pursue elitism in juniors. If you are good there are opportunities to go through the ranks through the AFL programs. The ethos of juniors is about participation and the rules are written around that. Whether you're the biggest, shortest, fattest, tallest, darkest, whatever colour you are, participation is what we talk about.

Mr FRASER - You get equal time.

Mr BOOTH - Have you been made aware by the AFL at any stage that there's \$500 000 they receive every year, and part of that specifically is for promotion of grassroots football?

Mr STOW - Not at all.

Mr FRASER - As an NTJFA?

Mr STOW - Definitely not. My perception was that when TSL came in, I knew the \$500 000 was always there. I thought it was to go around the 10 TSL clubs to appoint 10 junior development officers for the regions, then those officers were supposed to go out. They reworded that original statement, and now I think they're called regional managers or development. It was coincidental to me that 10 state-wide clubs, and there's \$500 000. I assumed that the junior developments were funded through TSL clubs

Mr BOOTH - In terms of the funding deed, which has got some KPIs through Sport and Rec, would you be an organisation that would like to have access to some of that \$500 000, for the promotion of grassroots football?

Mr FRASER - Absolutely.

Mr BOOTH - Do you think it would be better for that to come directly to you as a club, pursuant to a proposal, perhaps to Sport and Rec or some other body, rather than through AFL?

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Mr FRASER - We're a voluntary board that tries to run the association. There are costs involved by having to have a competition administrator. We want coaches to be accredited, so there are costs and all the things that go with it. We don't really have a form of income. Our income is derived by member clubs, having fees, through trying to obtain sponsorship. We run the finals series, where we take the gate, but also have costs. We really don't have a revenue source. Any time we can reduce our costs, we save every other club that's under us some money, because that's where we get our money from. We have to charge because we have to function. We're not there to make a profit; we just need to function. Any time we can get money, it's very beneficial.

Mr BOOTH - In terms of what you were speaking about with regard to the range of individuals who have access to playing football as a result of your activities, that would be a great benefit to the broader community if it stimulated greater participation?

Mr FRASER - Absolutely. That is what junior footy is about. We want more kids to be involved.

Mr BOOTH - People running around, kicking balls.

Mr FRASER - Yes. We've got good rules in place so they all get the opportunity to play. The more kids that play, the better it is - simple as that.

Mr STOW - Junior football is expensive. I was past president; a junior club in Launceston probably needs about \$50 000 to run.

Mr BOOTH - If there was funding directly to your club, or you got it indirectly, what would be the priority areas you'd spend it on to achieve the aim of greater participation?

Mr FRASER - I would say, one, training. It would be nice if the training we paid for, for coaches and trainers and so on, could be provided without costing money. That would be the number one thing. With that, what we're providing is better educated, better skilled coaches to offer better skills, and that makes the kids better. It's a tier thing. The more we can offer our member clubs and their coaches, the better off they're going to be. That would be number one. Then trying to reduce our own costs. Any support we've got helps us run the association.

Mr STOW - Umpiring is an integral part to what we need. We give the umpires' association money for development of their umpires. If we can help that side of it as well, it would be a positive. It could be a collaborative thing where we all work together for the benefit of everybody, which could be a cost-cutting structure. It could be better utilising the resources they already have.

Mr BOOTH - Across all of the junior associations?

Mr STOW - Yes. Maybe we're duplicating things over and over, where we could be adopting the standard sort of policies and broader things like that, not directly related to money, but it could advance playing the game of football that we all work on the thing. If you went to Southern Junior Football Association, it's a different set of rules. There's no collaboration on all those things.

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Mr FRASER - Talking about the umpires, we've developed in the last few years quite a good relationship with them. They don't get much funding either. We've provided them with some money, \$1 500 every year, to assist them with training. Also we give them the ability to bring in new umpires - mentors, trainees. They use the under 12s and under 13s as a training ground to introduce new umpires to the game. They have them in those games, mentor them, and there have been some good umpires out of that. There's been some kids that have gone on, one of whom did state league this year. He's still only a young guy. That's been beneficial to them, but there's no cost involved in that. It's a collaborative thing we have with the umpires to help them get umpires, because they've got a lot of old blokes. They need some new ones.

Mr BOOTH - So you run your whole organisation without any external support?

Mr FRASER - We've been out looking for sponsors so we've been able to get some sponsorship money. That's something we've done ourselves. There was, up until last year, I think, the Cadbury money.

Mr STOW - It was a statewide funded thing by AFL Tasmania, and we got a small cut. We got \$7 500 for four years; they got a statewide sponsorship.

Mr BOOTH - Per year?

Mr STOW - Yes. We would have actual costs of probably \$60 000.

Mr BOOTH - So that's your budget?

Mr STOW - That's the administration, just to run the association. That's \$60 000 for the association, then all the clubs have got things. Junior footy is not about going out and just kicking on a footy field these days.

CHAIR - AFL, as I take from your submission, at one stage were funding some of the monies for the umpires. They then withdrew from that. Do you know why they withdrew their funding and support of the umpire?

Mr FRASER - No idea.

CHAIR - Was that ever discussed with you?

Mr HAY - They formed their own statewide league umpires, so they needed the money for that side of it. In 2010 they employed their own umpiring coach.

Mr STOW - For TSL.

CHAIR - So they put the money and resources into that area and dropped off -

Mr HAY - Dropped \$10 000 off the local competition.

CHAIR - You are required to put in \$1 500 per year into the umpires to help them with their programs. Has there ever been an approach to AFL Tasmania since that, that it's

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money they probably ought to be considering, that they ought to be making a contribution towards umpiring in the junior areas?

Mr HAY - Not from the NTFA.

Mr FRASER - We've tried to work with the umpires. We've had dialogue with them, and we've done this in the last few years, because we try to keep their fees down, as much as we can, on our member clubs. Rather than them continuing to increase their fees, we have tried to get them to hold them. It's better for the clubs because it's less money they've got to pay, so we've said we'll allow you to mentor and bring in some new kids. We'll give you some money for training, help you out however we can, if you just keep your fees down. It's an approach where we've tried to help them to keep fees down.

Mr STOW - The umpires have an appointed person for juniors and some of that money would obviously go to him, so he would administer all the junior umpiring games for all the venues. He's their coordinator, and Andrew would communicate with him weekly. That's what they would do with part of that money.

CHAIR - The payment of the \$125 for the courses your members attend to become accredited, is that good value?

Mr FRASER - I haven't attended one of the courses.

CHAIR - Is it simply AFL Tasmania recouping the costs that would be incurred against them, or is that AFL Tasmania making money?

Mr STOW - No, in fairness to them - it was \$185, not \$125.

Mr HAY - It was \$125 last year.

Mr STOW - No, when I did mine it was \$185. They do bring external people in. The fitness guru in town was one of the people when I was there. So it's not all AFL Tasmania employees, but a lot of them were. Nick Probert was driving it when I was doing it; Trent Bartlett was there. It gives you core basics, but it probably also gave you access to all the things they have. It's core information, and as much as you wanted to derive from it, you could gain further. If you wanted to go to level 2, these are the pre-basics to go to the next level of coaching, which was good, because we've also now adopted that police accreditation is our preferred policy with the association, but obviously costs are involved in that again. We want to make sure the coaches are of the right standard within clubs. We reimburse every club which is directly involved and wants to go to those coaching courses; we pay for them.

CHAIR - Which is in turn paid by the kids who play football.

Mr STOW - Yes. If they have their own staff, why do we pay?

Mr GUTWEIN - I want to go straight to the recommendations you've made. One is financial support of the operations. We canvassed that. One of the suggestions was perhaps having those coaches' accreditation fees paid for, or maybe some assistance in

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regards to creating linkages with the other junior associations and coming up with a more efficient method of operation. Have you thought about a number?

Mr FRASER - Not particularly. All those things would make sense, but not necessarily in any order. We know what it costs us to run; anything we can reduce that by is going to have a reduction of costs on the clubs underneath. It's as simple as that. If our costs go up, then we need to raise some fees. I think any kind of support would be good. The coaches' accreditation would be fantastic; some other financial support would be good. Some support in adopting a blanket approach to junior football and having a junior football forum where we could discuss some ideas; there could be cost saving in amongst that. There are probably lots of opportunities, but we didn't come here with a figure in our heads and say \$5 000 and so on.

Mr HAY - On the financial side, unlike the NTFA, the junior clubs pay an affiliation fee, then they pay \$5 per registered player. That works out to be about \$11 000 taken from the clubs.

Mr GUTWEIN - From each club?

Mr HAY - No, as an overall thing. That is to pay their way in the NTJFA. That is across the board, over all the clubs. Some clubs might have two teams, others have nine.

Mr DOYLE - There are other areas that we select, perhaps even promotion of not so much the game but junior football. We're fighting other sporting codes as well for participants. It affects numbers in the clubs. We're relying on the clubs to get out there and recruit their own players. We are working on a TV commercial at the moment to air before next season, and TV advertising is not cheap.

Mr FRASER - I've spoken to Southern Cross and they're going to assist us with that, which is good. They'll be paying for some of the commercials or costs or whatever; they're going to give us some good air time. We see that as good for promoting junior football, and as it's on Southern Cross we will get a good reach.

Mr BOOTH - If it was competing against other sports it would be a bit difficult for public funding to go into one to compete against others.

Mr STOW - Too true.

Mr GUTWEIN - In regard to the development officers, the positions that have been created in the TSL clubs. I think Mitch Thorp was development officer for South Launceston. Do those positions create value within the NTJFA? Are they assisting at all? What's your understanding of how those positions should work and what benefit they're doing in getting more people?

Mr STOW - That is a recurring question that is asked from the clubs to us. We're saying, you need to approach them to come to the clubs. From what I understand, what they tend to do is the footy in schools program, which is a primary school program. They do the high-end development where they target the good players in the regions, and they have very, very, very limited contact directly with junior football clubs.

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Mr GUTWEIN - Is that something that needs to be rectified? Should they have more involvement with junior football clubs?

Mr STOW - We don't know what their KPIs are. We've never known. I've been around a long time, and not known what their duties were. It has never been explained in my time.

Mr DOYLE - I would have thought some of their duties would be in that recruitment at the grassroots level, to get the juniors into the clubs, through the ranks and then develop into senior players.

Mr STOW - There's a whole other group under us again, the Auskickers, which are run by the NTJFA clubs. When I first started, AFL Tasmania ran all those programs. When I took over as president of North Launceston, they asked me to adopt that. When I was there, that's about another 120 boys and girls, which we adopt under the Auskick program, which we run, which is all coordinated through AFL Tasmania. They use those figures on reporting back to AFL Australia and possibly back to you. Those programs are all run. It's not part of us; it's part of the member clubs. There is a whole other group again which is from 5-8 years of age.

Mr HARRISS - Could it be an observation that the footy family in Tasmania, because of our geography and close proximity and all of that, has an unreasonable or unrealistic expectation that there's this higher level of communication, coordination and interaction by AFL Tasmania? I've been around footy for a while, like others around this table. It can be easy to say we would like more interaction with and from AFL Tasmania. But you seem reasonably happy with administering the NTJFA and its success. I've listened to what you've said, particularly about some commonality around the place, and that could be coordinated by AFL Tasmania. Do we sometimes have an unreasonable expectation, in that we're happy running our competitions the way we do?

Mr STOW - I thought they were. AFL Tasmania to me was the high end. My perception of AFL Tasmania was that they were the high-end performance - TSL footy at the highest level football you can play - doing junior development for drafting purposes for AFL. I was quite comfortable that was their role. What you're talking about now in community football, I've never know of it.

Mr FRASER - We're not unhappy in the way we run our association. The relationship we have with AFL Tasmania is still quite fine. There's no issue with our relationship.

Mr BOOTH - You just don't get any money.

Mr FRASER - If we need their assistance, they're quite forthcoming. It's not like they don't want to help. We just need to keep asking if we want things. We're not here to complain about any sort of assistance or poor treatment or whatever, because there's none of that. But if there is money on the table, we should be able to have access to that. I'd be the first to put my hand up and say 'help us', because we'd be happy with that. That is an area for any club or association, that's how we function.

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Mr HARRISS - On that line, you've indicated to us how you operate the organisation. I was thinking of the overall state coordination. I don't think anybody on this committee was aware, until we embarked upon this process, as to what conditions sat around the \$500 000 state funding to AFL Tasmania. You've indicated to us you've never been aware of what those conditions and requirements are. I wonder whether any other footy organisation in the state is aware either. Had you'd been aware, you might've said, 'That ticks a box for us, so we should be entitled to whatever it is'.

Mr FRASER - We're a bunch of volunteers. There is probably a level of expertise above us that would be probably helpful at times. Is there a better way of doing things than what we're doing; is there a better approach? I don't know. Even just the human interaction and ideas and support, a lot of things, can be beneficial.

CHAIR - I don't think paid employees could do any better job than what you people do.

Mr HAY - I am on 35 cents an hour, Ivan.

Laughter.

Mr GUTWEIN - Until we embarked upon this committee we didn't fully understand what the expectations were from the state government. With the submission that we've received from the state government on this, there's probably an opportunity here for you to perhaps come back to us with some thoughts.

In 2011, the state government committed funding of \$2.5 million over a five-year period to AFL Tasmania, to support football in Tasmania through partnerships that drive significant economic and social returns to the community and provide a direct benefit to football at all levels in Tasmania and increase support for grassroots football.

That's the intent of that government funding. But what we've heard, is you felt, especially you, Arthur, that there was no opportunity at all, to share in that.

Mr STOW - Never discussed.

CHAIR - Thank you all very much for being here. You do a fantastic job for junior football.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr TONY NEWPORT AND Mr DEAN LAWRENCE, FORMER BOARD MEMBERS OF SLFC, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - In this environment, parliamentary privilege applies. However, once you leave this environment, it no longer applies; you're on your own. If we reach a stage at any time where you feel there's some evidence you want to give this committee in confidence, in camera, the committee will then make a determination on whether we should take it in camera.

Mr NEWPORT - I was vice-president of South Launceston when we put the submission to go into statewide in 2008. I was on the board for three years.

Mr LAWRENCE - I've been involved in South Launceston for close on 13 years and played all the junior football with east Launceston as well. I've also been a member through all that period, and coached and been on the board for the four years up until last year.

Mr NEWPORT - The critical issue for us was the failure to renew memberships at South this year and the year previous. We were made aware of that at the meeting convened to vote, or vote against the joint venture. The figure we were given was that they had achieved under 3 per cent of budget for 2013. That rang some alarm bells for me. When you're voting and getting your membership to vote for a joint venture, and you only have that many members on the board, I would suggest that most of the 3 per cent would have been the players. The players were being offered the opportunity to play at state league for the next year for the joint venture. That aroused my suspicions and everything else follows from that.

CHAIR - I need to say, and I am accepting that evidence, that we need to stick to our terms of reference, and that comes into management and looking into the financing of AFL Tasmania and the ability for AFL Tasmania to manage that situation as well.

Mr LAWRENCE - My major concern is the demise of the South Launceston Football Club, which I see as a community organisation. Unfortunately it had come down to a vote this year to join membership with Prospect. I thought that has come about and has been produced over about the last three years through a slow demise of running, with the help of AFL Tasmania, to destroy the club.

Mr GUTWEIN - Do you think AFL Tasmania has had a material role in that process?

Mr LAWRENCE - I sincerely do. From the original selection, we were in financial troubles. Braden McGee was asked to represent us as manager going into the TSL. He's an ex-employee of AFL Tasmania. We then gained Daniel Smedley as a CEO, which has also had conflict. He had done work with AFL Tasmania and been a very strong member of south Prospect. Then, on top of that, we've also had a coach that has AFL support and been paid for by AFL Tasmania, so over the last three years, AFL Tasmania has financed the managerial ship of our club.

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Mr GUTWEIN - In the submission, you make note that there is a view in regards to the fact that AFL Tasmania's preferred statewide model is a stand-alone senior team representing the Prospect region. How have you come to that conclusion?

Mr NEWPORT - I am happy to answer that. The original submission that AFL Tasmania put forward to all senior clubs in Tasmania at that time was one in which they wanted stand-alone teams, not clubs, representing demographic regions. You might remember this yourself, Peter. The clubs rejected it outright. We tended a submission through South that was very similar to the statewide concept that got off the ground in 2009. That was with existing senior clubs and reserves.

Mr GUTWEIN - Obviously I do have a history with this, but the committee can only make recommendations based on the evidence we find. The point that South Launceston Football Club being in a poor financial state enhanced the chances of the new Prospect club coming about, can you expand on that?

Mr NEWPORT - Let me go back to less than 3 per cent of membership for 2013, a vote that was going to vote for a joint venture, and a licence offer from AFL Tasmania that refused to offer south the licence, because of their poor financial condition. That is too convenient, that you have a club that can't get a sole licence because their finances have been run down, and yet you have people on the board and active within the club ensuring that the membership is run down so they can't be a successful club.

Mr GUTWEIN - We are talking about the Tasmanian government's funding to AFL Tasmania for the support of club football in Tasmania. How much financial support do you believe South Launceston would have received from the AFL over the last 12 months or previous 12 months?

Mr LAWRENCE - To the best of my knowledge, and not counting dollars or cents or tax that go into it, the CEO, the manager and the coach, plus the AFL payments, alone stand up to approximately \$230 000 that went into the senior club. Out of that, not one cent was seen by the previous South Launceston junior club. Under AFL authority and Daniel Smedley CEO, they split the club, juniors and seniors, as they no longer combine now and are separate. This is another administration thing we've gone through in the last three years or so. Totally, at the moment, they would be somewhere around that \$230 000 figure, I presume, with \$40 000 to the CEO, \$40 000 to the manager, \$80 000 to the coach and some \$70 000 worth of AFL payments.

Mr GUTWEIN - In regards to the junior club, why was that split? We heard evidence this morning from Baden Haywood that when the model of the integration of the junior club with the senior club was first mooted that it was seen as being groundbreaking. I think currently another club is looking at that model in Launceston at the moment. We went to Devonport; South Launceston went the other way. Why was that?

Mr LAWRENCE - I'm not totally privy to the full reasons other than the fact it would be easier to manage the senior club on its own without the junior interference. That's my personal thought, my privilege to say that, but may not be the sentiments of the whole club.

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Mr NEWPORT - We don't know, do we.

Mr LAWRENCE - No.

Mr NEWPORT - What we do know is that in the discussions prior to becoming a state league club, AFL Tasmania frequently mentioned we were a cradle-to-grave club. Those were the words they used, which they supported.

Mr LAWRENCE - This year alone, with the stand-alone juniors, which used to have good financial input into the senior club, this year they're standing at approximately \$15 000 in the bank after they've completed this season. They've also been asked to come up with payments of some \$14 000 to go towards the senior club. This is even without ground, Hydro, or anything. This is just for facilities up at South to pay \$14 000 for the privilege of having the South Launceston name. The junior club has not received in kind one cent of any funding whatsoever.

Mr GUTWEIN - Following on from the previous discussion we'd had with the NTJFA, as a junior club, has there been any direct assistance from AFL Tasmania, or any assistance that has manifested itself in any way that you can put your finger on?

Mr GUTWEIN - What I am aware of, not knowing totally what the manager and the coach do for their 40 hours a week while they are up at the football club - having to run my own business - there is meant to be a percentage of that time that is meant to go out into the community and junior schools and so forth. I can honestly say that they were rarely sighted, if not sighted at all, through our junior club and as far as grassroots football is concerned this year. I think it was a definite effort this year to purely concentrate on winning a TSL flag.

Mr NEWPORT - If you looked at the make up of this year's state league team, quite a few of those would have come through junior ranks and played in some of Dean's teams.

Mr BOOTH - Tony and Dean, you make some very strong claims in your submission. The reason we are here is to do with \$500 000 that is provided by the government to promote community football, grassroots football and so forth. You actually talk about that where you mention the activities that have occurred around the South Launceston and Prospect thing:

If their intention was to genuinely assist South Launceston then they needed to choose a different person, but that they did not indicates that their primary aim, a competition designed to increase the number of Tasmanians drafted in the AFL, was in their eyes worth the demise of a well-established community club. This was almost achieved in part by the contributory negligence of a CEO. The president and other board members also could be held accountable ... appointed by them indicates that they were either naive and not worthy of the responsibility placed on them to develop and support community football in this state or they were simply arrogant and believed that their planning models

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Are you saying that you believe that the AFL in its current configuration and direction actually works adverse to the participation and expansion of grassroots and community football there?

Mr NEWPORT - We are saying that the net result of running down the club was that a well-established community football club that did have its issues was going to go down the gurgler. Why would a football club vote itself to go out of existence in the way that South nearly did, because what was put on the table back in August was a joint venture in which they would lose their name, their colours, their facilities, and you would keep all the debt. What was in that for the South Launceston Football Club? We can't, for sure, say that that was the deliberate intention of AFL Tasmania but it is certainly a consequence of behaviour where the club was allowed to be run down. You cannot look at failing to renew memberships as anything other than a deliberate strategy. There is no other way you can provide an explanation for that. As a consequence the bar facilities were seriously run down. Whilst I am not advocating that alcohol should be the underlying support for football, it is certainly a part of the social atmosphere around a football club and certainly contributes quite a bit to the bottom line. Those things, I think, are quite alarming when you have existing debt and when you are instructed by AFL Tasmania, as I have it on Dean's authority and Dean can back this up, that they were instructed to spend to the full extent of their salary cap, and yet they weren't making any realistic attempt to pursue traditional and reliable revenue sources. None of that makes sense unless you look at the scenario where you have a low number of members, most of them players, and that is going to get your joint venture across the line.

CHAIR - Where did that instruction on the salary cap come from?

Mr LAWRENCE - It actually came through AFL Tasmania to ensure that we actually get a licence offered to us again after 2013, as in you have to lift yourself from the bottom of the ladder, pay your full extent of your payments, which is part of that \$70 000 that they issue across, make sure that is fully paid, and I think there might be some issues there, to get the club up. Obviously the club has improved out of sight but I have never come across a club that has won a flag one year and then been asked to fold at the next AGM.

CHAIR - At that stage would AFL Tasmania have been aware of the financial status of the South Launceston Football Club?

Mr NEWPORT - I don't know. Clearly they felt they needed to support the South Launceston Football Club. Scott Wade is on the public record in *The Examiner* on 10 August saying they step in to support clubs. They did not mention South Launceston specifically but they were actively engaged in getting Daniel in there. I am sure they were aware the club was underperforming. As part of the licence you had remain financially viable. They could have at any time looked at their bottom line and asked what they were doing about their debt, if they had chosen to take such action as they did and as much money as they already had. If I had put that much money into a business, I would want to know what they were doing with it.

Mr BOOTH - Tony, it is a fairly comprehensive response to the terms of reference to do with community football. You say in part:

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We sincerely believe that any future funding to AFL Tasmania must clearly uphold the development and support of community and grassroots football organisations above all other aims and outcomes.

You go on to say:

We believe the funding of elite competition such as the AFL should be left with the corporate sector. Tasmanian taxpayers have spent a lot of money for the privilege of having AFL teams play here and this has come at a cost. Junior and lower-tier teams are more often than not shut out of the elite venues such as Aurora Stadium and Bellerive for large chunks of the season, when only six AFL roster games are played here. It is time for a very serious rethink. Without the grassroots we won't be participating. We will be all watching the AFL and the English Premier League on pay television.

That is a very strong statement. My understanding of what you are saying here is that by supporting AFL to the amount we do it is damaging grassroots football participation.

Mr NEWPORT - I am not an enemy of AFL Tasmania per se. One of the really good things, particularly when they were refloating the idea of a state league competition, was that you had an independent body. The competition, as it was designed in 2008, had a lot of merit and also had money attached to going out into the community and to those community clubs that were not part of the state league. I believe that was a good model but it hasn't been pursued for some reason. I can't answer why. I think they should be asked to answer that.

In terms of drafting, in every action that AFL Tasmania has taken, from the Devils, the Mariners, it is aware, as I think many astute Tasmanians are, that the era of the 1960s and 1970s have gone and we are never going to compete at that level with the other states. We are probably never going to see the ilk of the players who were around at that time - Baldock, Hudson, Hart and so on. It was a remarkable period. We weren't just producing stars; we were producing legends. They have woken up that the competitiveness of Tasmanian football is measured by how many people are drafted and I think that has become their sole focus. In my view they have tunnel vision on that, that as long as you do that everything else is okay. I believe they have taken their eye off the ball. If someone is going to get drafted as an 18-year-old in 2031, 99 per cent of the reason they will be drafted is already in his mother's womb.

Mr BOOTH - Can you expand in regard to the contradiction in funding AFL with public funds? You're saying it goes against community and grassroots football.

Mr NEWPORT - You have to get them involved at a reasonably young age and stay connected which means that the junior clubs and the model of the cradle to grave clubs is a very good model for Tasmania. Junior clubs are a pain in the backside. I can tell you that now where I was on the board. Their parents are totally committed and they are not easy to manage but their heart is in the right place and they bring their kids along and they are quite dedicated. A lot of those people finish up being on your senior board at some stage. There is a really good community connection there.

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The future of our game is not entertainment, that will take care of itself, and AFL at the most elite level is entertainment. When you come here and watch a game you come here to be entertained. The community football is not about that. Community football is about being engaged, giving the kids somewhere to play, a bit of a social interaction for the parents and growing a love of the game. Dino and I are still here. We have been involved in the game for 60. I won't say how old Dino is, but we still love the game.

Mr BOOTH - Your strong view is that the government funding should be restricted to community football clubs et cetera rather than the corporate? Are you saying that the AFL should be funded by corporate sponsorship or the elite parts of it?

Mr NEWPORT - I would like to see the focus on the junior and senior competitions working more closely together and community clubs should be fostered. We are living in an age where it is so easy to be disconnected and I know footy clubs have a lot more competition than they used to have but people still love their footy. You see the kids running around with their Hawthorn jumpers on at five and six years of age. They are converted and they are ready to go and we need to give them a place to play .

Mr GUTWEIN - Where things have arrived at today with the new licence being 50 per cent share between Prospect and the AFL and with where the south sits, what is your view of how things are going to transpire? Where will the players go? Whilst the focus of this has been talking about South Launceston, we are talking about a lot of AFL money and therefore a share of public money being used.

Mr LAWENCE - Since we went into TSL, the club already had some debt and yes, it already had a bit of tax debt, I'm not privy to the exact amount. But on the first year that we signed to go into TSL, we signed up on the proviso that there are going to be three teams in that competition, which is the reserves, the under-19s and seniors, and that product has worked so well for the NFTA as in years and years, untouched, and they still come through under that under-19s, reserves and seniors portfolio. The following year, AFL, in their wisdom decided to say, no, we are only going to take two teams forward into our competition next year. As in, we have everyone signed up, we are all okay, ready to roll, and all of a sudden, we are going to wipe out all your family men out of the club and we are going to get rid of the reserves. Our reserves left the club, went up to Rocherlea and won the last four premierships which a lot of people are aware of. Our bar trade, committee, and membership then dropped to somewhere over \$45 000 in one financial year, in that year alone.

The next year, all of a sudden, in that period of time, and our CEO came in the following year, we have changed our constitution, we have joined up with the South Prospect alliance in NTFA because that is when we dropped those teams and we were saying, what's going to happen with all our so-called players who are not the elite but who we would like to keep in a community club and keep them going. They decided to shove them off to Prospect which is out of our zone and on the wrong side of the road and not even looking after our area at all.

Then, all of sudden, in the last two years, we have lost our under-16s which, yes, they were a nice group. The two under-16 groups have been moved to South Prospect, taking parents and kids away from the club, as in junior development again. It changed our constitution. Our financials, we have also had a bit to do with that ourselves, people

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running the club and so forth. But we have also been encouraged by AFL to invite South Africans over which was a \$24 000 experiment which AFL were meant to help out with but it still cost the club close to \$20 000.

The following year the committee said, no, let's not do it again because we can't afford it. The next thing, all of a sudden, we have another South African on the door who we have to look after for half a year which is another \$7 000 to \$8 000 out of the club coffers. Things that have been going slowly through the year - we have demised from that three-team competition into, I shouldn't say 'demise' because we have won a senior competition, but we are very much struggling. Hence the reason that the AFL have pulled the plug on our financial problems, as we stand at the end of last year or half-way through this year with also incurring that tax debt which was basically set aside to enforce that players got paid. You will top up and do whatever you can to win a senior premiership.

Mr NEWPORT - A hard question to answer, Peter. I am not privy to the comings and goings of how grounds are being leased and so on. My understanding is that South, as it stands, will retain the lease at Young Town but I don't know that for certain. My understanding was that the new joint venture would play most of its home games here but as to where they would train and what their facilities are, I have no idea.

Mr BOOTH - Were you ever made aware by the AFL or were you made aware by anyone of the \$500 000 that is available for grassroots football?

Mr LAWRENCE - As far as the last four years are concerned, we have basically been run by AFL.

Mr NEWPORT - It was always in the licence, where we were given \$50 000, as I recall, for junior development and community liaison. It might not have been called that but that was the intent so we were meant to have someone who would go out to Longford and Deloraine and those kind of places and run clinics around the area in schools and those sorts of things.

Mr BOOTH - That was provided by AFL Tasmania?

Mr NEWPORT - That was the intent of that money. I do not think that was ever spent that way right from the word go. I think that whilst it was supposed to go, ways were found for that to get to players and so on. I am not saying that anything wasn't above board but the spirit of it somehow got lost very early.

Mr BOOTH - To be clear, AFL provided that \$50 000 to the club and then you are not sure that that ended up meeting its intended purpose?

Mr NEWPORT - Yes. They may have met the letter of the law but I don't think they met the spirit of its intention.

Mr BOOTH - Was there an audit or follow up through AFL Tasmania with regard to what happened to that money?

Mr NEWPORT - Dean might be able to answer that question.

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Mr LAWRENCE - Under the licence AFL were meant to audit it every three months so they should be well aware of any financial problems throughout the whole runnings of the TSL.

Mr BOOTH - No, an audit into that particular funding because we are looking at the spending of the \$500 000 and Tony has answered that he thinks there was \$50 000 provided for purposes that would probably meet the key performance indicators. The grant was given by Sport and Recreation.

Mr LAWRENCE - To the best of my knowledge our manager at the time, Braden McGee, was one of the employees of the club and that was his wage to also manage and to do junior development. If you would like to ask those people on their KPIs, what they have achieved over the last four years I would love to see it.

Mr BOOTH - But you are not aware that there was any audit done by the AFL to make sure that those KPIs were met?

Mr LAWRENCE - Correct.

Mr BOOTH - And you are not aware of what the KPIs were?

Mr LAWRENCE - They were in our previous minutes of meetings and subject to each year when pay rises come through and were voted on. They were meant to have a job description clearly set out and they should have them but I have failed to see any major paper work whatsoever after the clubs in this situation.

CHAIR - I am going to have to draw this session to a conclusion.

Mr HARRISS - Dean, you went to some notes that you had - hand written notes that I could see - where you indicated to the committee that AFL Tasmania directed certain things to happen and I recall that was to do with -

Mr LAWRENCE - The salary cap?

Mr HARRISS - the salary cap. Do you have any documentation which you could table for the committee, not today, but forward to the committee?

Mr LAWRENCE - I can go through all my notes as far as committee meetings and so forth, put forward to them, and come up with dates.

Mr HARRISS - Yes, if you wouldn't mind, please. Any external observer of the committee might say, 'What in the hell has that to do with this inquiry?' but I go back to the government's own criteria which sit around the \$500 000 funding, for the direct benefit to football at all levels, which Peter mentioned a while ago, and to increase support for grassroots football. I go there for the position that if we see the demise or downgrading of a club like South Launceston or any other club, I see a direct detraction from the government's own intent for the funding of the \$500 000. We might see a reduction in participation. In the same vein, I'll go to the question, where you'd indicated, Tony, with the lack of attention to renew memberships at the club, it was inevitable that the club was

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going to be in a difficult circumstance. Was the joint venture which was put forward ever seriously an option, or is your view that the joint venture would be rejected by South Launceston and that was the desired outcome anyway?

Mr NEWPORT - No, North Launceston president Thane Brady made a public comment around July, that brought a response from Rod Patterson. I think the most unexpected outcome of all was that South Launceston would be so successful on the ground. While they were struggling, people weren't paying much attention to how much money was going into the club. Once they were successful, you had a rival president coming out, saying, this ain't right, they're putting all this money into that club, and they're on top of the ladder.

I have absolutely no proof, but I'm happy to go on the public record and state that I suspect at that point there was a deal afoot, that the debt would somehow be reduced with the joint venture. I think once it became public knowledge of how much they were getting the money, I reckon AFL Tasmania got cold feet. I can't prove that. It's purely speculative, you may have to ask them yourself, but I can't say any president was going to look his members in the eye and putting up the proposal that was put up unless they expected to have minimum turn up, and get it up. I don't think there was any double-dealing; I think they genuinely wanted the joint venture, and running the membership down really suited that purpose.

Mr LAWRENCE - I don't think there was any option for South Launceston Football Club, as to run alone again to buy it for its TSL licence; it was never going to be an issued. They are hoping South Launceston would just lie down and die, and this new venture will get up and going and take this new place, instead of or creating a new club at the demise of another one. There was no 'South, do you wish to carry on in TSL?'. No, it was, 'Do you want a joint venture or not?'. That's what the club voted on.

Mr NEWPORT - The difference between how the membership was canvassed before we went into state league the first time, we brought up the chairman and CEO of the NTFL to put their case for staying in the NTFL. We had members there. We informed them all along the way. You couldn't come at it a more different way than how they came about the joint venture this time.

CHAIR - Tony and Dean, thank you very much for being here.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr IAN CLARKE, NORTH WEST UMPIRES ASSOCIATION, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr CLARKE - I am the president of the North West Umpires Association, which is the smallest umpiring group in the state. We have about 80 members and we supply the TSL, mainly at the Burnie and Devonport venues, but they travel here and umpire in Launceston, as well as the regional comp down there which is the NTFL.

Of the 80 members there is a real gap. There are older people like myself and to give you an idea, at the NTFL senior grand final the field umpires this year were a 16-year old, a 50-year old and 54-year old. We have very few members in the 25 to 40-year age group. It reflects the change in demographics of the north west coast where a lot of our young people leave for either employment or further education. It is a real issue for, not only umpiring groups, but for football clubs on the coast and also other cultural groups. This age cohort has left. We find it very difficult in that situation to fundraise. We don't have the people who will stay at the bar at the Ulverstone Cricket Club, which is our base during the winter, because the vast majority are under 18.

In the senior grand final this year on the boundary we had to run four, and one would have been over 18, the rest were 15 and 16-year olds. That is where we are. We are a declining group on the coast. We are trying to get back with the Darwin and North West Football Association Umpires to try to bolster our ranks, but they are finding it very difficult as well, and the Leven has been using our umpires. If we have a surplus one they take one of our umpires out there. I still goal umpire at 63-years old in the seniors.

CHAIR - Good on you.

Mr CLARKE - It's the lack of depth coming through that I would be even doing that at my age. I guess you people want to hear the evidence. We, with AFL Tas, sign a memorandum of understanding between AFL Tas and the North West Umpires Association. I know Shaun is not there. I don't know if we had even signed one. They had picked the cream off our umpires - field, boundary and goal - to umpire in state league. Either as a senior squad member of the TSL or as a rookie. The rookies are mainly in the colts of the under-23 and the senior squad members are in there. For that, we paid a levy, totalling \$2 500 per year, paid at the rate of \$100 per week during the state league season.

CHAIR - From AFL Tasmania?

Mr CLARKE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - That's for all of the umpires?

Mr CLARKE - That is basically an admin fee. We have to hire a facility to train, which is the Ulverstone district cricket club in River Road, Ulverstone. During the six months we pay the Central Coast Council, the cricket club - because they hold the liquor licence - and the electricity, half the rates, and the phone.

Mr BOOTH - Do you have to donate blood to them as well?

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Laughter.

Mr CLARKE - No. The state league umpires are about a quarter of our members, and we worked out, to be based there for a year is about \$10 000. Given our scarce resources to get funds from, that is a lot of money for us. The local/regional league contributes the other \$7 500.

Mr GUTWEIN - That's the NTFL?

Mr CLARKE - Yes, it is.

Mr BOOTH - Can I interrupt there, and ask what effect that has on participation and new umpire entrants and the ability for you to continue that very heavy financial burden?

Mr CLARKE - It is a real issue for us, Kim. It's very hard to obtain sponsorship for an umpiring group. Football clubs can offer something out there but umpiring groups cannot. We cannot get a major sponsor on board down there, because there's declining economic activity. Gunns used to sponsor us, it was a minor sponsor, but they sponsored a lot as well. We take a levy out of umpires each week, you pay 5 per cent of what your game fee is, to run the association.

Mr GUTWEIN - What do you see as being the way forward?

Mr CLARKE - We have had this argument with AFL Tasmania, and I will raise it again here. We need funding to umpire junior development. That might be a 15 or 16-year old, or a 35-year old retiring from football. When I say umpire junior development, it could mean all of that. The ones the state league have now, from our association, are the ones we have blooded, paid for mentoring and coaching, right through, and then they grab them if they show potential. What they should be doing is putting money in to junior development in umpiring, to take that burden from us as an umpiring association.

Mr GUTWEIN - How do you attract an umpire in the first place?

Mr CLARKE - It is very difficult. I speak to a lot of footballers, including my future son-in-law, playing for Ulverstone. I said come on mate, you could umpire, you would walk through it, you're very fit. He said, I can't, I don't want to go out there and get abused. These days, the abuse isn't there like it used to be. There are codes of conduct, and you switch off anyway when you are umpiring. You have to block your ears.

Mr BOOTH - A bit like parliament.

Laughter.

Mr HARRISS - Only a more noble profession.

Laughter.

Mr CLARKE - It's very difficult. We can get the young ones, Peter, I'll tell you that. We've got them as young as 12 now on the boundaries. They'll come because of pocket money. When they get to 16, 17, 18, 19, when they get a job - bang, they've gone. Ex-

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footballers, in the early 1990s we picked up from the north-west area, and I think Mr Dean will remember very clearly. We picked up five or six ex-footballers who turned into really good senior umpires for us, would've done 100 games plus senior finals for us. We just can't now. I find it very difficult. I have a good relationship with all the clubs on the coast. I said to them, 'If our numbers decline like they are, you will be on a Saturday, on a rotational basis, providing umpires for your reserves.' That's how serious the situation is.

I don't think money alone attracts umpires. You can throw heaps of money, but it doesn't attract umpires. When Ivan and I started, we had to pay tax. It's now classified as a hobby, therefore we do get more money, relative to what we earn but it is still very difficult.

Mr GUTWEIN - But some sort of development program funded by the AFL, do you think that would be -

Mr CLARKE - Yes, I do.

Mr GUTWEIN - What's happening in the other regions, is it a similar problem that everyone's facing?

Mr CLARKE - It is a very similar problem, Australia-wide. Not just Tasmania-wide. It's an Australia-wide problem of both attracting and retaining umpires. Retention of umpires is very difficult. They do a year or two, then they disappear on us.

Mr BOOTH - Are there any key factors that you can identify? I could suggest a few to you -

Mr CLARKE - Yeah, on the north-west coast, Kim, further education work - they're the two key ones - age and therefore family situations. We've surveyed them, don't worry, to see why our umpires are drifting away from us. Family - the young ones - abuse still is there. If they're on the boundary and the ball goes out by that far, and there are people right beside it, they're going to have a say when they say, 'Gee, it's not out on the full, it's out'. They're going to say something to them. That is still a factor. There are multiple factors there.

Mr BOOTH - Do they ever cite liability risk, like duty of care or potential litigation?

Mr CLARKE - No, they don't. We have public liability through AFL Tasmania, to the tune of \$20 million. It's like all sporting clubs, you would be well aware of that. Umpires are in the same boat as football clubs.

CHAIR - Ian, I take it that all umpiring groups around the state are treated similarly by AFL Tasmania. Are they?

Mr CLARKE - It's not as open and transparent as that.

CHAIR - That's the information I was given, so I asked you the question.

Mr CLARKE - We have AFL Tasmania and the NWUA. I never see the NTFUA here in Launceston, neither do I see the southern umpires. I sincerely hope that we're treated no

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differently from the Hobart and Launceston groups. We are treated a little bit differently because it's very Hobart-centric. We have a state umpiring manager we would see twice a year on the coast. For 18 rounds, I would suggest that person should be on the coast ideally a third, but certainly more than twice a year.

CHAIR - That person's from AFL Tasmania?

Mr CLARKE - Yes, employed by AFL Tasmania - Michael Brown.

Mr HARRISS - Since Michael's appointment, and that was at the establishment of the TSL, is it a case that his involvement is for the development and progress of the TSL umpires, and not to the broader umpiring family?

Mr CLARKE - Right through AFL Tasmania there's a very strong emphasis on elitism and on the elite group, whether it's the umpiring group or the football group in Tasmania. I think they have lost the plot a bit, in that the next TSL footballer or umpire may be coming from a grassroots competition well away that doesn't receive much funding.

Mr GUTWEIN - Do you think a coordinated approach to the way the three regions operate in regards to umpires and to agreements is important? Second, from the point of view of development, that the AFL is part of a coordinated approach, that the three regions looks at a development program, an attraction program as well, I presume, for umpires more broadly, that other associations can draw out of and draw from?

Mr CLARKE - Yes, I do.

Mr GUTWEIN - Has that been suggested to them?

Mr CLARKE - Yes, we have told them they should be the umbrella here, and they should coordinate. Yes, we have suggested that, Peter.

Mr GUTWEIN - What's been the response?

Mr CLARKE - They don't take it up.

Mr GUTWEIN - Why not?

Mr CLARKE - There's no funding. I'll be direct, there's no funding. They say it's the end of October. We have our budget, I think they told me - I said I'd love to see a copy of that budget, to see where the money is going. I've never received one. I don't expect to. If that answers it.

Mr GUTWEIN - It does answer it very clearly.

CHAIR - Any other questions?

Mr HARRISS - Yes, and on that thread that Ian has been developing in terms of what I might call the umpiring association's 'bleeding the umpires' and then AFL Tasmania poaching them if you like, for the TSL. The AFL established the TSL, and they run

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the TSL, yet they haven't established an umpires' fraternity which they run specifically for the TSL. They rely on the umpires' associations to train, nurture, recruit, and for you, as you indicated earlier, to pay the outgoings at the venue that you use, then AFL Tasmania uses those umpires whom you develop. You also mentioned, Ian, you are looking at joining forces with other umpire associations to bolster your numbers, would it be your desire that you get some extra funding? You get some funding from AFL Tasmania now, so you can develop that, if they are going to rely on you to continue to provide umpires to the TSL? If so, what sort of a dollar would that be?

Mr CLARKE - That's a hard one, Paul. When AFL Tasmania established the state league, they were going to have a southern umpires coach manager and a north/north-west one. Never occurred. That person was going to be charged with exactly what you said. Part of his or her brief would have been to follow exactly what you said.

Mr HARRISS - I wasn't aware of that. That's interesting, because \$500 000 from the state government to do all sorts of things, in terms of promoting and growing football.

Mr CLARKE - My suggestion, Paul, was that that person should be fulltime for six months of the year.

Mr BOOTH - Have you ever been aware that there was \$500 000 provided by the state government for the development of grassroots football?

Mr CLARKE - No I haven't, Kim.

Mr BOOTH - AFL have never made you aware of it, because you're not aware of it?

Mr CLARKE - No.

CHAIR - We know there is a problem for umpires throughout Australia, where football is played. Is there a better model running in any other areas around the country that you are aware of?

Mr CLARKE - Our regional coaches, which we fund, for interest - in conjunction -

CHAIR - From the monies that you -

Mr CLARKE - Receive from the NTFL, not from the state league or AFL Tasmania. They have attended a seminar in Melbourne, and they have networked with other umpiring associations in Australia, and brought some ideas back. For example, social media. You can't rely, like I would, on an email now. You would go Facebook or Twitter, or something like that to attract the younger ones. More delegation of umpiring roles, rather than relying on themselves so much. They can say you go and give the training drills for tonight. To try and get some ideas. AFL Tasmania have paid for their airfares and accommodation. They do that. I'm not coming in here to bash AFL Tasmania. They give us accreditation results, materials, the green shirts. One of our green shirts, they're the first year umpires, boundary, goal or field. Each year, one Tasmanian goes to the AFL grand final, and they are paid for by AFL Tasmania. I don't want to do that because -

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Mr BOOTH - Are you saying they'd give you the shirt off their back then?

Laughter.

Mr CLARKE - Not so much that, Kim. I don't know if they'd give us the shirt off their backs. They do stuff for us. We've been at the forefront of trying to attract more females into umpiring, and two of those female green shirt umpires, did get to Melbourne to the AFL grand final, in the past. I have to be very aware of that, and what they have done.

To sum up, I think AFL Tasmania has to get away and be much more open and transparent. They have to put some funds into the grassroots umpire development.

CHAIR - Ian, thanks very much for coming today, giving your evidence and tabling that document.

Mr CLARKE - On the back it has Michael Harper as president. I took over from him, he had to resign for personal reasons. It has his name, but I did sign it. The red in it was points that they wanted, priority appointments. I said we will guarantee appointments to Burnie and Devonport. We are not going to sign stuff that says priority. We are a group, and we are only as strong as our group's weakest link, and we're not going to... There are red things on there that I made them change, and Shaun did. He was at least very good to do that.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.