



18 June 2019

In reply please quote:
File 20190618

The Chair
Legislative Council Select Committee
AFL in Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Ivan

AFL – TERMS OF REFERENCE

I thank the Committee for inviting me to comment on this inquiry and tender this submission addressing the terms of reference.

(1) The likely benefits to the broader Tasmanian economy and community from having a Tasmanian team in the AFL;

It is very clear the broader Tasmanian economy will benefit from having an AFL team in Tasmania. It means a reduction in fan and taxpayer money leaking to Victoria and a boost for a wide range of businesses associated directly or indirectly with the project.

The community benefits are perhaps even more significant. The project will repair a decades old injustice; enhance Tassie patriotism/sense of pride and connection; keep more of our best talent in Tasmania; provide healthier outcomes through participation (preventative health); and instead of FIFO, initiate employment and educational opportunities – club administration & management, sport medicine, media, event management and so on.

There is a huge opportunity for our young people to not only participate on the field but also off the field, offering some real employment opportunities.

(The 20 worst “hotspot” regions for youth unemployment are mapped annually by the Brotherhood of St Laurence not-for-profit organisation. It shows that many regional and outer suburban areas bear the heaviest burden.

Youth unemployment is the unemployment for those aged 15 to 24 in the labour force. The national youth unemployment rate of 11.2% is more than twice Australia's overall unemployment rate (5%), at December 2018, and almost three times the unemployment rate of those aged 25 and over.

stevemartin.com.au



In Tasmania, the South East (including Oatlands, Huonville, Swansea, and Nubeena) is still the highest rate at 17.8%, although it has dropped from fifth to sixth on the ladder.

Hobart (including Margate, New Norfolk, Dunalley, and Richmond) is now the ninth worst region in the country with 16.9% youth unemployment.

The North and North West of Tasmanian (including Devonport, Burnie, and Queenstown) are at 16th place with a youth unemployment rate of 15%.

Source – Brotherhood of St. Lawrence

http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/11134/2/BSL_Smashing_the_avocado_debate_youth_unemployment_hotspots_Mar2019.pdf

(2) Whether or not the Tasmanian Taxpayer, or the AFL, should subsidise Melbourne based AFL Clubs playing in Tasmania;

I am strongly of the view that the financial burden rests overwhelmingly with the AFL. The Tasmanian taxpayer already subsidised Victorian teams to the tune of millions of dollars for a handful of games in Hobart and Launceston. **At the very least, Tasmania should expect the same level of start-up support as the AFL provided to Greater Western Sydney Giants (GWS) and the Gold Coast Suns (GCS).**

Currently, the State Government is working on a framework that looks towards achieving 50,000 members; yet with Tasmanian, population 509,965 (2016 Census), in comparison to GCS & GWS: -

- Gold Coast Suns, population 569,997 (2016 Census) with an average of only 11,900 members over the past eight years and with a three year build up prior to entering the competition.
- Greater Western Sydney, population 2,307,183 (2016 Census) has an average of only 15,349 members over the past seven years and with a four year build up prior to entering the competition.

MEMBERSHIP	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Gold Coast Suns	14,059	8,904	10,485	11,482	13,643	12,854	11,665	12,108
Great Western Sydney		9,096	11,608	11,761	13,480	15,312	20,944	25,243
Source: AFL Annual Reports								



(3) *The on-going support required to sustain a Tasmanian AFL team;*

I believe a properly set up Tasmanian AFL team will pay for itself, given the huge increase in public support that can be expected if we have our own club.

However, the AFL does provide funding for its clubs: -

AFL CLUB Distribution	Year 2017	Year 2018
Top 4 Club payments		
Gold Coast Suns	\$ 24,163,000.00	\$ 22,808,000.00
Great Western Sydney	\$ 22,591,000.00	\$ 22,786,000.00
Brisbane	\$ 20,011,000.00	\$ 22,306,000.00
St. Kilda	\$ 19,443,000.00	\$ 19,138,000.00
All Club total	\$ 263,597,000.00	\$ 266,462,000.00
Source	AFL Annual Report	AFL Annual Report

(4) *The possible solutions to the AFL's perception of Tasmania being geographically and politically divided;*

While there is a healthy rivalry between the north and the south of Tasmania, this is merely an excuse for the AFL to deny us justice. I am very confident sports fans from across the Island will, now and into the future, adopt the new club as their own, particularly if matches are split evenly between our two largest cities.

(5) *The impact on the future participation rates in AFL in Tasmania of not having a Tasmanian team in the AFL;*

Participation rates in AFL are already falling in Tasmania and will continue to do so as other team sports grow, unless, we have our own Tassie team.

(6) *If Tasmania were to establish an AFL team, when would it be the optimal time for it to commence;*

The Committee will be aware of my T23 campaign which aims for a Tasmanian AFL team by 2023. The reasons for this date are that it gives us sufficient time to prepare and it coincides with both the TV rights negotiations and the end of the current deals between the Tasmanian Government and Hawthorn and North Melbourne.

To further that argument, in 2008 the AFL gained the support of the 16 AFL clubs to establish a team on the Gold Coast as well as in Western Sydney.

THE NATIONALS *for Tasmania*

Senator **STEVE MARTIN**

NATIONALS SENATOR FOR TASMANIA



- Three years on, the 2011 AFL season introduced the Gold Coast Suns as the 17th AFL team with the fixture featuring a weekly bye.
- Four years on, the 2012 AFL season introduced the Greater Western Sydney as the 18th AFL team, eliminating the weekly bye
- Research did not present a GWS or GCS requirement for a VFL team or a similar pathway prior to entering the AFL competition

This proves that the AFL can and has established teams in non-traditional states within three or four years from initial commitment, so no reason why they cannot make a commitment for Tasmania to have its own **AFL** team by 2023.

(7) Any other matter incidental thereto.

As a senator I have secured the support of the Commonwealth Government for an AFL team in Tasmania. The **T23.com.au** web site I set up has more than 500 members. Interesting many of these are from the Mainland, proving to the AFL that the injustice of not having our own team is felt right across the country.

The AFL has taken Tasmania for granted for far too long. It is time to play hard ball. *Set up a Tassie AFL team or we will invest taxpayer resources into other sports that recognise our values.*

I urge the committee to make strong recommendations along these lines to the Tasmanian Government, and I urge the Government to adopt them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Martin', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Steve Martin

NATIONALS SENATOR FOR TASMANIA

stevemartin.com.au

🏠 1-3 Rooke Street, Devonport TAS 7310 ☎ 03 6423 1453

✉ senator.martin@aph.gov.au 📘 TasmanianSenatorSteveMartin 🐦 @Senator_Steve

Senator Steve Martin, National Party of Australia, Devonport TAS.