

**Thursday, 25 July 2019**

Legislative Council Select Committee  
Inquiry into AFL in Tasmania

**Football Tasmania submission to the Inquiry into AFL in Tasmania**

Dear Committee members,

As the peak governing body for Tasmania's most played team sport (football/soccer), Football Tasmania welcomes your Inquiry into AFL in Tasmania.

While we note that the intent of this Inquiry is to consider ways to support AFL in Tasmania, we believe it is important that we make a few comments on behalf of Tasmania's football community.

We fundamentally believe that no young Tasmanian should be disadvantaged from playing sport at the highest levels simply because they live in Tasmania, regardless of what that sport is.

We welcome the continued push for more Tasmanian teams in national competitions, because it provides clearer talent pathways for Tasmanians and we would certainly welcome a Tasmanian AFL team in its national competition.

We are however concerned about the way funding is allocated between various sports in Tasmania.

As you would be aware, the majority of sports bodies in Tasmania operate on a not-for-profit basis and are funded by a mix of player registration fees, support from the relevant national peak organisations, corporate sponsorship and government funding.

While funding for capital works initiatives is generally provided through access to various competitive grant funding programs offered by government and through one-off grants from either local, state or federal government levels (or through funding from a combination of government levels) the process for funding recurrent expenditure for the administration and development of each sport, especially at a grassroots level, is ad hoc in nature.

We are concerned that the way the Tasmanian Government allocates funding to support recurrent spending, particularly on grassroots competitions and talent-pathway development, is not aligned to any performance-based or participation-based criteria.

As a consequence, some sports in Tasmania are receiving disproportionately more funding from the State Government compared to others.

Below is a table of participation figures in Tasmania for a number of major sports. The figures cover the period between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2018 and were collected as part of *AusPlay*, the official statistics collated by Sports Australia.

SPORT	PARTICIPANTS (Tasmania - all ages unless indicated)	ESTIMATED STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING (per annum) <sup>1</sup>	ESTIMATED FUNDING PER PARTICIPANT (per annum)
Football (soccer)	34,581	\$300,000	\$8.70
AFL	24,275	\$8.5M	\$350.15
Netball	17,768	\$800,000 <sup>2</sup>	\$45
Basketball	17,627	\$250,000	\$14.20
Cricket	17,180	\$1.5M <sup>3</sup>	\$87.30
Gymnastics	8,282 (under 15 only)		
Touch football	6,150 (aged 15+ only)		

Source: *AusPlay*, Sports Australia, April 2019

<sup>1</sup>Figures are estimations based on publicly available data.

<sup>2</sup>Figure includes \$250,000 recurrent funding plus \$550,000 each year to host Collingwood Magpies netball matches.

<sup>3</sup>Figure includes \$500,000 recurrent funding through Icons program plus an average \$1M each year since 2015 through Events Tasmania for select matches and tournaments.

While football is by far the most popular team sport in Tasmania, it receives a fraction of the recurrent funding that AFL receives.

For example, Football Tasmania receives \$300,000 from the State Government, compared to \$8.5 million for AFL and \$1.5 million for cricket.

There is significant funding disparity between sports in Tasmania. It's no surprise that the sports that receive more funding tend to have clearer, more articulated talent pathways.

We want to ensure every young Tasmanian playing a recognised major sport is afforded equal opportunities to reach the pinnacles of their sport.

We are not in any way suggesting that AFL doesn't deserve funding. Quite the opposite. We are simply suggesting that in the interests of fairness and equity, there needs to be a transparent process for allocating funding.

We congratulate the State Government on recognising the important link between sport and social inclusiveness, community development and positive health outcomes and for providing a significant level of funding to sport in general.

We also accept that the State Government is limited in the amount of funding it can provide to sports in Tasmania.

That is why it is even more important to ensure that there is a fair, performance-based and participation-based model for allocating recurrent funding between sports.

We encourage you take these considerations into account when delivering your final recommendations into the viability of an AFL team in Tasmania and look forward to hearing your findings.

We would also welcome the opportunity to provide further evidence to support this submission in person.

Yours sincerely,



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**CEO**

**Football Tasmania**

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