

AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2006





AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

110TH ANNUAL REPORT 2006

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FRONT COVER: Jubilant West Coast players celebrate after winning the 2006 premiership.



The West Coast Eagles take to the MCG before their thrilling 2006 Toyota AFL Grand Final triumph over the Sydney Swans.



FINANCIAL VIABILITY

OBJECTIVES

- Continue building a strong financial base for the competition while maximising economic benefits for all stakeholders.
- Grow total revenues while capturing a greater share for the AFL and the clubs.
- Ensure all clubs are financially secure and operating effectively.
- Provide for the future.

KEY OUTCOMES

Broadcasting

- Secured five-year television broadcasting agreement with Seven and Ten networks worth a record \$780 million.
- Cash component of television agreement is \$690 million, a 70 per cent increase on the previous agreement.
- Largest broadcast rights agreement for Australian sport.
- Secured five-year new media agreement worth \$60 million with Telstra, a 200 per cent increase on the previous agreement.
- Secured three-year radio rights agreements of some \$8 million, a 240 per cent increase on previous agreement.

Corporate partnerships

- Renewed agreements totalling nearly \$16 million with partners including Toyota, Foster's Australia, Qantas, InterContinental Hotels Group, Kellogg's, City of Melbourne, Rebel Sport, Origin Energy and Sony Computer Entertainment.
- New agreements totalling more than \$2 million with Medibank Private, Tabcorp, Betfair and Pedigree.

Ensure all clubs are financially secure

- *Next Generation* strategy adopted by AFL Commission allocates \$1.4 billion for the period 2007-2011:
 - Record \$650 million to AFL clubs.
 - Record \$208 million to game development.
 - \$82 million to establish a Future Fund.

Support to AFL clubs includes:

- Base distribution of \$449 million or \$28.1 million per club.
- An extra \$96 million or \$1.2 million per year per club.
- Annual special distributions and strategic partnership funding totalling \$36 million over five years.
- Prizemoney, signage and membership revenue totalling \$69 million over five years.

Provide for the future

- The Future Fund will strengthen the competition's asset base through investment to secure new revenue streams.

LEADER OF MEN: After 289 matches, five club best and fairest awards, three premierships, a Brownlow Medal and All-Australian selection on five occasions, champion Brisbane Lions captain Michael Voss called it a day at the end of 2006.

COMPETITION AND THE GAME

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain competitive nature, and attractiveness of the game.
- Stronger AFL competition presence in NSW and Queensland.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Toyota AFL premiership season attendance of 6.204 million, second highest on record, down 1.27 per cent on record set in 2005 (6.28 million).
- 2006 finals attendance of 532,178, up 11 per cent (52,000) on 2005 finals total attendance.
- Combined total attendance of 6.74 million people, only 27,618 fewer than 2005, when an all-time premiership season attendance record was set.
- Staged nine finals in four states and 29 off-field events for 12,000 people.
- An estimated 161,700 people attended Grand Final week events at Federation Square; 100,000 people attended Grand Final parade; 12,000 people attended post-Grand Final concert at Punt Road Oval.
- Record club membership of 519,126, the sixth successive year of growth. One in 39 Australians is a member of an AFL club.
- Average weekly national metropolitan TV audience for each round of 3.94 million, 2 per cent lower than record of 4.03 million set in 2005.
- Average unique browsers per month on AFL/Telstra network of 1.51 million, 27 per cent up on 2005.

Stronger competition presence in NSW and south-east Queensland

- Carrara secured as an AFL venue with Gold Coast City Council investing \$2 million and the AFL \$1 million in first stage of redevelopment.
- Two premiership season matches, a NAB Cup game and a regional challenge match played at Carrara in 2006.
- Agreement with Kangaroos to play 10 premiership season games at Carrara from 2007-2009.
- Gold Coast City Council to invest further \$500,000 in Carrara for 2007.
- \$20 million allocated as part of *Next Generation* strategy to develop south-east Queensland and western Sydney for the AFL competition.
- Strategy adopted for Sydney market with focus on building the AFL brand via the Sydney Swans.
- Agreement secured with Melbourne and Western Bulldogs to play games in Canberra.

Trends in game

- Research indicates more continuous play.
- Less stoppages and less stop time.
- Average player congestion (flooding) decreased.
- Decline in contested marks arrested.
- New ruck rule eliminated PCL (knee) injuries to ruckmen at centre bounces in 2005.
- 2006 finals generally played at high level.

ELITE COMPANY: Chris Grant set a new mark for the Western Bulldogs in 2006, breaking Doug Hawkins' record of 329 games. Grant finished the season on 336 matches.





THE FUTURE: Participation in the game at all levels continued to grow in 2006, with another record mark for the NAB AFL Auskick program.

PARTICIPATION

OBJECTIVES

- Continue to drive high levels of participation in community programs in all states and territories.
- Increased presence in multicultural communities.
- Increase the game's attraction for women.
- Broaden international presence.
- Grow the game in NSW and Queensland.

KEY OUTCOMES

Participation

- Record participation of 581,839 in 2006, up 7.8 per cent on 2005. Sixth successive year of growth.
- Growth of 5.6 per cent in NAB AFL Auskick program to 147,371 participants. Eighth successive year of growth.
- Transition from NAB AFL Auskick to junior club football continued to improve, with a 42 per cent increase in the number of under-9 teams to 1171.
- Transition from junior participants (9-12) to youth (13-18) continued to improve with an 8 per cent increase in the number of under-13 teams to 681.

Quality environments

- Approval for a further 21 facility projects at country football and netball clubs in Victoria, bringing to 75 projects worth \$4.5 million under joint initiative between the AFL, Victorian Government, Football Victoria and the Victorian Country Football League.
- \$12.5 million allocated under *Next Generation* to support facility development at community level.

Growth of game demographically

- Multicultural project launched in partnership with Victorian Government, with development officers at Hawthorn, Collingwood, Western Bulldogs, Richmond and Essendon.
- Participation by women in the game increased 23 per cent in 2006 to 11,795 participants.

International

- AFL South Africa established, with 3000 registered participants in competitions in North-West Province.
- AFL under-18 Indigenous team toured South Africa in March, 2006, for matches against South African team.
- International registered participation of 30,000 in 12 countries with bodies affiliated with the AFL.

NSW and Queensland

- Funding of \$4.5 million confirmed by Shire of Baulkham Hills for Withers Road complex in Sydney.
- \$21 million Blacktown Olympic Park project launched by NSW Government and City of Blacktown.
- In past two years, primary inter-school competitions have grown from 36 teams in Sydney to 356 teams in 2006 for years 5 and 6.
- Agreement with all major independent schools to run AFL programs for the first time in 2007.
- Six-week Friday night competition introduced in 2006 for private/independent schools in Sydney.
- 37 per cent increase in participation in NSW/ACT in 2006 to a total of 84,132. Participation in metropolitan Sydney increased 43 per cent to 35,000.
- 11.5 per cent growth in Queensland to 69,796.
- In south-east Queensland, participation increased 9.1 per cent to 49,895.
- *Next Generation* will see more than \$100 million allocated for continued growth in NSW and Queensland.



RELATIONSHIPS

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen connection to the community.
- Improve management of relationships with supporters.

KEY OUTCOMES

Brand tracking

- In 2006, 2984 interviews were conducted in annual AFL brand tracking study.
- 59 per cent of people nationally “have an interest” in AFL. Of these 86 per cent said they “regularly follow” AFL and 35 per cent said AFL was the sport they were “most interested” in (up from 31 per cent in 2003).
- In Sydney, the percentage of people who are “most interested” in AFL has increased from 13 per cent to 16 per cent since 2003.
- 67 per cent of people nationally watch AFL on TV.
- People like the game because it is exciting and entertaining and for its skill, athleticism and speed. They are also attracted to it because it is fun, geared to families and has a sense of the unpredictable.
- 46 per cent of people nationally see the AFL as “community oriented.”

Supporters

- *Next Generation* will benefit all supporters, with:
 - General admission prices for 2007 premiership season and NAB Cup kept at 2006 levels.
 - Ongoing facility development at venues including Subiaco Oval, AAMI Stadium, SCG and Carrara.
 - TV, radio and new media agreements providing unprecedented access to the game.
 - Continued expansion of the national game.

Community

- Essendon-Richmond match helped raise funds for an appeal supporting families of six local teenagers killed in February near Mildura.
- AFL and SANFL helped raise \$600,000 for families of those killed in Gladstone factory explosion in April.
- Community camps maintained as key component of AFL calendar.
- Essendon-Richmond Dreamtime at the 'G game.
- Sydney-Essendon Marn Grook Trophy game.
- Anzac round including re-opening of MCG with Collingwood-Essendon match.
- AFL partners Federal Government in Harmony Day to promote multicultural Australia.

Policy

- Dr Melanie Heenan appointed as project officer to implement respect and responsibility policy.
- Education program on preventing violence for AFL club player welfare managers, AFLPA staff and staff from state bodies linked to respect and responsibility policy.
- AFL partnered annual White Ribbon Day campaign.

MAKING A CONNECTION: Kangaroo Brent Harvey with son Cooper after the Roos' win over Hawthorn in round six, Harvey's 200th AFL game.



EFFICIENCY AND COLLABORATION

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure harmony and collaboration with clubs and players.
- Invest in people and culture and improving industry efficiency.

KEY OUTCOMES

AFL clubs

- *Next Generation* strategy adopted by AFL Commission, with more than \$650 million allocated to clubs from 2007-2011.
- Conferences scheduled between club CEOs and AFL executive with focus on game's strategic direction.
- CEOs from Collingwood, Essendon, Geelong and West Coast Eagles assisted with negotiations with AFLPA for new Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Funding from Victorian and local governments and AFL and clubs for training and administration facility developments for Victorian-based clubs.
- Jim Watts, former St Kilda CEO, retained as a part-time consultant by the AFL for a number of projects.
- Range of projects undertaken with clubs via the strategic partnership fund.
- AFL shared services expanded to service seven clubs in accounting, membership and payroll.
- Annual special distribution policy maintained in *Next Generation* financial strategy.
- In 2007, direct financial support to clubs will range from \$9.7 million to the Kangaroos and \$9.2 million to the Western Bulldogs to \$6.2 million to clubs including Collingwood, West Coast Eagles, Adelaide, Fremantle and the Brisbane Lions.

AFL players

- New Collective Bargaining Agreement concluded with AFLPA for 2007-2011.
- Agreement secured an additional three years to the current CBA.
- Agreement to deliver benefits to players totalling \$790 million, including \$59 million to the AFLPA.
- Total player payments will increase 7.3 per cent in 2007, 7 per cent in 2008, 3.5 per cent in 2009 and 3.3 per cent in both 2010 and 2011.
- Increased support for health and education.
- Player appearances totalling 60,000 hours per year maintained to promote game development.

People and culture

- HR department established following appointment of Jane Hollman as Manager, People and Culture, to work across all sections of the football industry.
- Strong executive team established during past three years.

TEAMWORK: Essendon's James Hird and Scott Lucas embrace after a goal during the Bombers' win over the Brisbane Lions in round 17.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

RON EVANS

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE



CEO'S REPORT

ANDREW DEMETRIOU



THE AFL COMMISSION: (from left) Colin Carter, Mike Fitzpatrick (appointed Chairman-Elect February 19, 2007), Bill Kelty, Chris Langford, Sam Mostyn, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou, Chairman Ron Evans (retired February 19, 2007), Graeme John and Bob Hammond.

GREATER HEIGHTS BECKON

Strong performances in key areas in recent years have put the AFL in an ideal position to make even further progress via a bold financial strategy that covers all aspects of the game.

One of the often-quoted keys to success in sport, business and life itself is to make the most of your opportunities when they arise.

That principle was uppermost in the minds of the AFL Commission and our executive team during much of 2006 as we developed our financial strategy for 2007-2011 titled *Next Generation: Securing the Future of Australian Football* (see section starting page 127).

During some eight months of debate and discussion with AFL clubs, players, state and territory football bodies and supporters, the AFL Commission considered how to allocate some \$1.4 billion to all levels of the game during the next five years.

In the context of Australian Football, our country's only Indigenous game, that level of investment is unprecedented in almost 150 years.

Next Generation was made possible by the successful conclusion of our television rights, new media and radio rights negotiations for 2007 and beyond, the renewal of major corporate partnerships with Toyota, Foster's and the National Australia Bank, and new partnerships established with organisations including Medibank Private, Tabcorp and Betfair.

The agreements also included a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the AFL Players' Association for the next five years, further enhancing the partnership we have with the AFLPA and maintaining the industrial harmony and stability of the AFL competition.

The various agreements are unprecedented in the history of our game in terms of their scope and level of financial support. It is more than appropriate that on behalf of the AFL Commission, I wish to recognise the first-class performance of our Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Demetriou, and our executive team in delivering these outcomes, while also developing with the AFL Commission the long-term strategic direction for the AFL competition and the game itself. These agreements include:

- Television broadcasting – the Seven and Ten networks secured the right to broadcast AFL matches from 2007-2011 in an agreement worth \$780 million, a record level for broadcast rights in Australian sport. The agreement includes a cash component of \$690 million, which is 70 per cent higher than the previous agreement, which provided \$405 million cash for the period 2002-2006.
- New media – Telstra retained the AFL's new media rights in a \$60 million agreement for the period 2007-2011, a 50 per cent increase on the previous agreement.
- Radio rights – agreements totalling \$8.24 million were secured with various radio networks to broadcast AFL matches from 2007-2009.

This represents a 250 per cent increase over the previous three years, 2004-2006, which totalled \$2.34 million.

- Corporate partnerships – Toyota, Foster's Australia, Qantas, InterContinental Hotels Group, Kellogg's, City of Melbourne, Rebel Sport, Origin Energy and Sony Computer Entertainment renewed agreements valued at nearly \$16 million, while new partnerships were secured with Medibank Private, Tabcorp, Betfair and Pedigree. They will invest more than \$2 million in the AFL.
- Collective Bargaining Agreement – a new agreement was concluded with the AFL Players' Association, which will provide players with more than \$790 million during the next five years, including \$59 million to the AFLPA. Importantly, the agreement did not just focus on player payments, as it includes medical expenses, increased funding for the players' retirement fund and increased support for the AFLPA hardship fund to assist former players.

2006 financial result

Total AFL revenue increased by \$12 million to a record \$215 million in 2006, an increase of 6 per cent on 2005.

Our operating profit before grants and distributions was \$140 million, an increase of \$10 million or 8 per cent on 2005.

The net profit before transfers to reserves was \$7.6 million, an increase of 16 per cent on 2005 and \$2.5 million above budget.

Other highlights:

- Expenditure increased by \$3 million to \$72 million, up 4 per cent.
- Grants and distributions increased by \$9 million to \$133 million, up 7 per cent.
- Net borrowings at year-end were \$10.2 million, in line with our original five-year projections.

Twelve of the 16 clubs were profitable in 2006, the same as in 2005. Aggregate club profitability was \$12.7 million, an increase of \$2.06 million on 2005.

Next Generation

Although it took some eight months to complete, the development of our *Next Generation* financial strategy was perhaps the easy part.

During the next five years, the implementation of our financial strategy is an even bigger challenge to ensure we deliver the right outcomes to maximise the investment of some \$1.4 billion at all levels of our game consistent with our long-term vision for Australian Football to 2015 and beyond.

SPECTACULAR: First-year Collingwood player Dale Thomas provided one of the highlights of the Anzac Day clash against Essendon with this mark over Andrew Welsh.



This period is an exciting time for Australian Football. The decisions we make in this time will impact on the strength of our game for many generations. Getting our plans right is a challenge for all involved in our game, and an important responsibility for the AFL Commission and executive.

Planning, preparation and patience were the key ingredients in delivering our various media rights agreements and corporate partnerships for 2007 and beyond and those same key ingredients were applied to the development of our *Next Generation* strategy.

We will apply the same process in the implementation stage to ensure that our investment delivers the outcomes we are seeking to secure the future of the game at all levels.

Broadcasters

I would like to acknowledge the excellent coverage of our game during the past five years by the Nine Network and Foxtel through its Fox Footy Channel.

Both organisations were innovative in their coverage of the game and played significant roles in the national television audiences for the AFL competition reaching record levels since 2002.

On December 23, 2005, the AFL Commission accepted an offer from Publishing and Broadcasting Limited on behalf of the Nine Network for the right to telecast all eight games per week during the premiership season for five years from 2007. Acceptance of this offer was subject to the rights of the Seven Network and Network Ten under the terms of their first and last rights deed with the AFL.

On January 5, 2006, Seven and Ten advised the AFL that they were prepared to match the offer from PBL to broadcast all eight games per round during the premiership season on free-to-air television for five years from 2007.

The rights included the potential to license up to four games per week to pay television, subject to the consent of the AFL.

We greatly appreciated the support of PBL Chairman James Packer and Foxtel CEO Kim Williams, for the extent of their original offer, which was the largest broadcast rights agreement for any Australian sport in terms of its value and extent of coverage.

In February, 2007, Network Ten, the Seven Network and Foxtel reached agreement for Fox Sports to broadcast four premiership season games per week from 2007-2011. This will mean that for the first time, all eight premiership season games will be broadcast in full on free-to-air and pay television from 2007.

We are pleased to continue our partnerships with Network Ten and Foxtel, which have significantly expanded the national coverage of our game, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland.

After five years, Seven renews its 45-year association with the AFL and we look forward to further developing our partnership during the next five years.

I also wish to acknowledge the work and support of our broadcasting sub-committee, which consisted of AFL Commissioner Mike Fitzpatrick, legal advisor Jeff Browne, CEO Andrew Demetriou, Chief Operating Officer, Ben Buckley, and General Manager Commercial Operations, Gillon McLachlan.



FUTURE INVESTMENT: Michael Voss was part of a promotion of Australian Football to help encourage the next generation of players to pursue the game in a non-traditional market.

The work undertaken by this group in conjunction with the administration over two years laid the foundations for an agreement that underpins the future of our game.

Corporate partners

Another important agreement was concluded in 2006 when our major corporate partner, Toyota, renewed its association with the AFL for a further two years.

For the past three seasons, Toyota has been our premier partner through its sponsorship of the premiership season, finals series, Brownlow Medal and mark and goal of the year. We look forward to further building our partnership with Toyota during the next two years.

I also wish to acknowledge the continuing support of other corporate partners including the National Australia Bank, Foster's, Qantas, InterContinental Hotels Group, Kellogg's, City of Melbourne, Rebel Sport, Origin Energy, Sony Computer Entertainment, Medibank Private, Tabcorp, Betfair and Pedigree.

Government

Our organisation continues to work closely with all levels of government – federal, state and local – in a number of areas including facility development, curriculum-based programs for primary and secondary schools and other initiatives including 'Welcome to the AFL', which introduces Australian Football to multicultural communities, and AFL Kickstart, which helps spread the code in Indigenous communities.

During 2006, the NSW Government and City of Blacktown launched the \$21 million Blacktown Olympic Park project that, when completed in 2008, will include two AFL-size grounds that will be shared with cricket.

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks announced a joint funding arrangement between the Victorian Government, various local governments, the AFL and AFL clubs that will see up to \$80 million invested in training and administration facilities for clubs including Richmond, St Kilda, Carlton, Essendon and the Kangaroos.

Victoria Park, the former home of Collingwood, will also be renovated and maintained as a training venue for umpires and TAC Cup matches.

The Federal Government also confirmed funding of \$670,000 over

SAINTLY SMILES: St Kilda's Jason Gram (left) and Nick Riewoldt embrace after their side's emphatic 59-point win over Collingwood in round 14.



the next three years for the AFL to establish Indigenous academies in Blacktown and Campbelltown in Sydney.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough, during one of our strategic planning meetings in 2006 so that we could better understand the Federal Government's policies covered by his portfolio and how our organisation might work more effectively with the Federal Government, particularly in Indigenous and multicultural communities.

AFL clubs

One of the more pleasing aspects of recent seasons has been the strengthening of the working relationship between the 16 AFL clubs and our organisation.

Through initiatives such as the facility development reserve,

strategic partnership fund, the continued growth of shared services and the provision of strategic planning, finance and marketing and communications assistance we have gone a long way towards the philosophy of maximum collaboration between the clubs and AFL off-field and maximum competition between the clubs on-field.

A sincere thank you to the club presidents, chief executive officers, coaches, administrators and board members for the important role they play in our game.

State bodies and community football

While the media and public focus is on the 16 AFL clubs each week – some might say each day – of the season, the national competition represents just 640 participants in our game in any year.

When you consider that in 2006 our game had more than 581,000 registered participants, you realise that there is a vast network of

MAINTAINING A COMMUNITY FOCUS

The AFL should never lose sight of the fact that the AFL competition, the 16 clubs and the game itself is dependent on the support of the Australian community.

We therefore have an obligation to embrace the community in return. This manifests itself in a number of ways including our investment in facilities for supporters, funding for game development programs throughout Australia and overseas, community camps, specific programs for multicultural and Indigenous communities, as well as a continued commitment to key policies covering racial and religious vilification, drugs in sport and our respect and responsibility policy, which addresses violence and attitudes towards women.

The capacity of Australian Football to bring communities together was clearly demonstrated after two tragedies in 2006.

In February, six teenagers – Stevie-Lee Weight, Shane and Abbey Hirst, Cassandra Manners, Josephine Calvi and Corey Dowling – were killed in a hit-and-run accident near Mildura. All were actively involved in sport, particularly football and basketball.

Following a suggestion by Essendon coach Kevin Sheedy and communications manager Simon Matthews, we staged a community tribute game between Essendon and Richmond at Red Cliffs near Mildura to support an appeal established by Mildura Rural City Council for the families of the victims.

The council, the local community and businesses all rallied to transform the Red Cliffs Oval and more than 10,000 people attended the game as a tribute to the victims and their families.

The following extract from a letter to the *Herald Sun* by Steve Timmis, a resident of Irymple, captured the spirit of the day. He wrote: "To see the likes of Hird, Richardson, Sheedy and Wallace shed a tear, hug people and mix with mere mortals after the game, showing genuine concern for those who have been hurting, was amazing.

"Football showed again that it is much more than a game. It is an unbreakable thread that weaves its way through our whole social fabric."

In May, 2006 a munitions factory explosion at Gladstone, north of Adelaide, claimed the lives of Damian Harris and Matthew Keeley, who played for South Flinders Football Club, and Darren Millington, a former player and committee member of South Flinders.

A fundraising program led by AFL Commissioner Bob Hammond and the South Australian National Football League raised more than \$600,000 for the families of the victims.

I also would like to pay tribute to our AFL players who contribute more than 60,000 hours of their time each year to their local communities with much of their work going unnoticed.

Through the AFL Foundation, we recognise the work of our players each year with the AFL Community Leadership Award.

The 2006 winner was Joel Bowden of Richmond who works with the underprivileged at the North Richmond housing estate, St Mary's House of Welcome, Collingwood estate and the Very Special Kids organisation.

He spends every Tuesday at the North Richmond estate, which is a diverse community of some 5000 people from 46 countries.

Joel and fellow AFLPA executive member Mark Bolton of Essendon played a major role in securing support from the Victorian Government to establish a home for homeless youth in inner Melbourne.

The Victorian Government committed \$3 million to the project after receiving a proposal from Joel, Mark and Derek Linsell of the AFL Foundation. The remaining \$3 million will be funded by the AFLPA and AFL Foundation.

They and other AFL players had been working each week to help provide food and shelter for homeless youth in Melbourne and then devised a program to help young people through education and personal development to break the homeless cycle.

– RON EVANS

state leagues, community-based competitions and local clubs that underpin the AFL competition. Much of that network relies on more than 61,000 volunteers involved in coaching, team management and a variety of administrative roles.

AFL Game Development programs and funding supports the following elements of Australian Football at a community level:

- 180 full-time and part-time development officers who manage NAB AFL Auskick, coach accreditation, school clinics and competitions and talent programs in 96 regions.
- 581,839 registered participants in programs and competitions longer than six weeks in duration, more than any other football code in Australia.
- 130,000 participants in carnivals and knockout competitions less than six weeks in duration.
- Administrative support for the more than 2500 local football clubs fielding more than 11,000 teams each year supported by more than 61,000 volunteers.
- 147,361 NAB AFL Auskick participants at 2491 centres.
- 34,567 school visits and clinics reaching 1,286,232 children.
- Competitions for more than 6700 school teams.
- Accreditation for more than 2800 coaches and umpires each year.
- AFL Kickstart program for Indigenous communities.
- Talent development programs in each state and territory.
- NAB AFL Draft Camp, NAB AFL Under-18 and Under-16 Championships and the AIS-AFL Academy.
- 30,000 international participants from 12 affiliated countries.

We wish to thank everyone involved for their continued commitment to our game in communities throughout Australia as well as overseas.

AFL Commission

The various major agreements that were concluded during the past year and the development and release of our *Next Generation* strategy made for a challenging and exciting year for the AFL Commission.

I would like to thank each AFL Commissioner most sincerely for their continued contribution to the game and their preparedness to devote significant time to their role.

It is an honour to serve as Chairman of a group of people who are providing the leadership and future direction to our game at all levels.

Personal thanks

As this is the last time I will report to you as Chairman of the AFL Commission, following the announcement of my retirement on February 19, 2007, I would like to say that it has been a privilege for me, my wife Andrea and my family to be not only involved in the game for so long but to have been able to have developed many lifelong friendships and met so many wonderful people along the way.

Football has held a special part in our lives for nearly 50 years after I joined the Essendon Football Club in 1958, and later at the West Perth Football Club. Our game is not just an exciting and involving sport, but it brings together people from all parts of our lives, not just

as players and supporters, but as contributors. I feel so privileged to have been a small contributor to its development during my time as a member of the Essendon board, and lately with the AFL Commission.

I am grateful to all the AFL Commissioners I have worked with since 1993 for their commitment and contribution to the development of the game – it has been a pleasure to be part of such a high quality team.

During my time as Chairman, I have also been fortunate to develop a close working relationship with two outstanding Chief Executive Officers in Wayne Jackson and Andrew Demetriou as leaders of our administration.

Wayne placed a great deal of emphasis on the national growth of our game, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland, while Andrew and his team have built on what Wayne established and have taken all of our key measures including attendances, television audiences, participation and broadcast and sponsorship revenue to record levels.

A special thank you to AFL Commissioner Bob Hammond for agreeing to serve as Acting Chairman of the AFL Commission during my illness.

He took on the role at short notice and, with the support of his fellow Commissioners, provided important leadership to the organisation when we released our *Next Generation* strategy.

My thanks too, to all those in our clubs, not just those in executive positions, but all those at all levels of the club scene who do so much to ensure our game continues to be pre-eminent in Australian sport. This same sense of contribution cascades through all levels of the game – to those volunteers who work so hard, and often without thanks, to bring along our next generation of champion players and champion supporters.



I would like to congratulate and endorse Mike Fitzpatrick (left) on his appointment as Chairman-Elect of the AFL Commission. He has had a very successful career in business, as a player and dual premiership captain of the Carlton Football Club, and as an administrator as Chairman of the Australian Sports Commission, and as a member of the Melbourne Park Tennis

Centre trust during the period in which it became the home of the Australian Open. He has made a significant contribution to the AFL Commission since his appointment in 2003, showing he has all the qualities to be an outstanding Chairman.

I also wish to place on record Andrea's and my appreciation of the support we have received from a large number of people associated with the AFL clubs and the game in general during my illness. That support has reinforced our view that we have been very fortunate to be part of a wonderful game which involves so many wonderful and caring people.

Ron Evans
Chairman, AFL Commission

A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT

AFL Chairman Ron Evans has made a significant professional and personal impact on Australian Football at all levels.

On February 19, 2007, the AFL Commission was advised by our Chairman, Ron Evans, that after 14 years' service, he would be retiring from the Commission at the Annual General meeting on March 22 this year.

We received his resignation with regret.

Ron has made an outstanding contribution to Australian Football as a player and administrator and has provided outstanding leadership to the AFL Commission, executive and the game itself during his term as Chairman.

I do not know of anyone in football who has made a greater contribution to the game.

His influence on the AFL as an organisation and the game itself has been profound, and it has been a great privilege to have worked with him on the Commission, and to consider him a friend, mentor and influence. He has consistently said that the role of any administrator is to leave their post in a better condition than it was when they started. On any analysis, Ron has fulfilled that objective – at every level, our game has never been healthier.

During his time as Chairman, the game has flourished like never before, with records set in broadcasting agreements, expansion of the game, attendances, participation rates, membership and the influence of the AFL on making a difference in the broad community. On top of that, his legacy will be ongoing with the execution of the AFL's future policy *Next Generation*, a plan for investment in our game for the next five years. This plan has Ron's guidance and purpose written all over it.

It was fascinating to note that in public and private, Ron made it a point that the AFL was never to be seen to be celebrating its successes. His view was that success depends on constant observation, maintenance, vision and hard work. His announcements, speeches and public positioning were consistently about what's next, not what's been.

All that is an outline of the great talent of Ron as a business leader, but there is one key point that should never be overlooked – his unyielding capacity to act with total fairness and integrity, a set of values that he impressed on all about him, not by command but by example. Patrick Smith, the senior sports columnist in *The Australian*, put it starkly in his commentary on Ron's retirement (February 20, 2007). He wrote:

"To name just (Ron's) achievements is to cherry pick the AFL list released yesterday. But as expansive and detailed as it is, the list does not detail the most important Evans legacies. Integrity is one, dignity is the other."

Ron has served the AFL Commission since 1993 and has led the Commission as Chairman since 1998. It is often forgotten that he was also a champion footballer, a dual Coleman Medallist as full-forward for Essendon and a great club administrator during his time as President of Essendon.

In June, 2006, he received an Order of Australia for his contribution to Australian Football as a player and administrator, for service to business and commerce and to the community through the support of a number of charities. He has also been recommended by the AFL Commission for Life Membership of the AFL.

As a consequence of Ron's resignation, it was my privilege to nominate Mike Fitzpatrick as Chairman-Elect, a nomination which was unanimously supported by the AFL Commission.

Mike was appointed to the AFL Commission in 2003 and has extensive experience in both business and football. It is fascinating to note that Mike's experience is a near replica of Ron's – he was a champion player and premiership captain, a director of the Carlton Football Club, successful personally in business, and sports administration, and has been a dedicated member of the AFL Commission.

Bob Hammond, Acting Chairman, AFL Commission

COMMITTED: AFL Chairman Ron Evans' contribution to the code in an era of significant change will long be recognised.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The AFL Commission acknowledges the importance of good corporate governance, which establishes accountability for the Commission and management and provides the policies and procedures for the equitable treatment of the 16 member clubs, recognition of the rights of other stakeholders and the Commission's role as the custodian of Australian Football.

The AFL corporate governance policies and procedures remain under constant review to ensure they meet the expectation of our member clubs, stakeholders and the community generally. We have recently completed a review of our governance policies and procedures to ensure we have adopted appropriate governance practices.

The role of the AFL Commission

To enable the ongoing prosperity of Australian Football, the Commission is committed to act in the best interests of the AFL to ensure it is properly governed and managed.

To achieve appropriate direction and control, the key role of the AFL Commission is to:

- Protect and enhance the interests of member clubs in the context of the AFL Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- Protect and enhance the interests of the game through national and international development programs and the provision of grants to affiliated bodies to support Australian Football at all levels of the community.
- Through constructive engagement, review, add value to, approve and monitor the strategic direction and objectives.
- Appoint, delegate to, support, evaluate and reward the performance of the CEO and other executives.
- Review, approve and monitor the corporate plan, linked to the strategic objectives.
- Support, review and monitor member clubs' operational and financial performance.
- Oversee risk management and regulatory compliance.
- Monitor the integrity of financial reporting.
- Ensure ethical standards and appropriate behaviours are adhered to, and
- Have transparent reporting and communication with member clubs and other stakeholders.

Board composition

The names of the AFL Commissioners (directors) in office at the date of this statement are given in the Financial Report contained in this document.

The AFL Commission currently comprises eight non-executive Commissioners and the CEO.

The minimum number of Commissioners is six and the maximum is nine and no more than one third of Commissioners can be Executive Commissioners (including the CEO).

Two Commissioners, except the CEO, retire by rotation each year, but may offer themselves for re-election for another term.

All Commissioners are expected to prepare fully for all Commission meetings and to attend as many Commission meetings as possible.

Chairman of the Commission

The Commissioners appoint one of the non-executive Commissioners as Chairman of the Commission.

Commissioners' conflict of interest

Commissioners are required to disclose all matters involving the AFL in which they have a material personal interest.

Where a matter that a Commissioner has a material personal interest and a matter relating to that interest is being considered at a Commission meeting, that Commissioner must not:

- Receive papers in relation to the subject.
- Be present while the matter is being discussed, or
- Vote on the matter.

However, the Commissioners who do not have a material personal interest in the matter can pass a resolution that:

- Identifies the Commissioner and details the Commissioner's interest, and
- States that those Commissioners are satisfied that the interest should not disqualify the Commissioner from voting or being present.

Independent professional advice

A Commissioner may seek external advice, at the AFL's expense, provided the Chairman is notified before advice is sought and the advice sought is in relation to the discharge of the Commissioner's responsibilities relating to the governance of the AFL.



Commissioner induction

The Commission has a process by which new Commissioners are provided with executive management briefings and materials and publications regarding the operation of the AFL.

Commission committees

The Commission has established two committees to assist it in the discharge of the Commission's role and responsibilities. However, the Commission has not delegated any of its authority to those committees.

The Commissioners who are members of these committees are outlined in the Financial Report in this document.

The key roles of the committees are:

Audit committee

The audit committee assists the Commission with its responsibilities by monitoring and advising on the:

- Completeness and fairness of the view given by the financial statements of the AFL.
- Integrity of the AFL's accounting and financial reporting, and
- AFL's accounting policies, practices and consistency with accounting standards.

Remuneration committee

The remuneration committee assists the Commission with its responsibilities by monitoring and advising on the:

- Non-executive Commissioner remuneration.
- CEO remuneration, and
- Executive remuneration.

Relationship with management

The ultimate responsibility for management and control of the AFL in its totality is vested in the Commissioners who may delegate any powers, under whatever conditions they consider appropriate, to management.

The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the AFL and the implementation of the Commission's strategies, in accordance with Commission delegations, policies and procedures.

One of the Commission's major objectives is to work with management in a professional, productive and harmonious manner for the ongoing prosperity of the AFL.

Communication with member clubs

The Commission has a policy of active engagement with all member clubs. Commissioners meet with each member club at least twice a year to discuss a wide range of matters relating to the AFL's internal and external environment. Commissioners and management also provide regular briefings for member clubs' chairmen/presidents and CEOs.

Commissioners are also encouraged to attend AFL matches during the football season.

Risk management

The AFL operates under a general risk management framework established by management for the Commission, which identifies and manages the principle risks of the AFL.

The management of the AFL is developing an enterprise risk management model that reflects appropriate practice. The audit committee's role will be expanded to oversee this important function on behalf of the Commission.

FULL HOUSE: RAAF Roulettes thunder over a packed MCG before the traditional Anzac Day clash between Collingwood and Essendon.



THE GOAL IS TO BUILD THE GAME

The AFL can rightfully be proud of its recent achievements, however it fully intends to build on its status as a leader and innovator by serving the interests of all stakeholders.

The 2006 season may well be seen to be one of the most important in the AFL's history. This was the year that followed new records set in all our key indicators – attendances, club memberships, television audiences and participation – but it was also the year in which the AFL Commission and administration was entrusted with an investment policy designed to make our game stronger and, ultimately, impervious to all challenges.

Our investment strategy – *Next Generation: Securing the Future of Australian Football* – came off the back of wonderful broadcast agreements, partnerships that underpinned the strength of our game and its capacity to reach into the hearts and minds of so many Australians.

The agreements with the Seven Network and Network Ten, struck in January, 2006, and later agreements with Telstra (new media) and our radio partners have seen our broadcast arrangements (2007-2011) increase in value by more than 50 per cent on the previous five-year period.

In February, 2007, the Seven and Ten networks reached agreement with Foxtel for Fox Sports to broadcast four premiership season games per week from 2007-2011.

This is something for the game to celebrate – not us as administrators, or players, or stakeholders. The game is the hero.

And it is the protection and development of the game at all levels that drives every plank of our strategic imperatives.

The game starts at the grassroots level, and it is here that we will see the strength of our business invested in the short-term, the near-term and the very long-term.

It's all about the game, and all our focus will be on making the game even better than it is right now, but that doesn't mean tinkering with rules, processes or structures. By 2015, we must have:

- More community grounds, with the best facilities.
- More clubs sharing those grounds.
- More participants playing on those grounds.
- More of the best available talent profiting from those facilities.
- More opportunities for those players to display their skills on the national stage, in front of big crowds and great TV audiences.
- More penetration into New South Wales and Queensland, with aggressive pushes into key population centres, and more AFL games played in New South Wales and Queensland.
- More Indigenous players, and better opportunities for all of them.
- More of the current immigration wave making Australian Football their first-choice sport.
- More involvement with all parts of the community.

And, directly flowing on from that:

- More people watching our game live and on television.
- More benefits flowing to commercial interests attached to our game.
- More money to invest in the circle of football's life – grassroots, players, fans, the elite.
- And finally, more certainty for our 16 clubs, and an equality of opportunity for all clubs – on the field and off the field.

The focus of *Next Generation* will be about making Australian Football the No.1 choice of the next generation of talent, and the one after, and the one after that.

Next Generation

The successful conclusion of our media and corporate partnership agreements during the past year gave the AFL Commission a unique opportunity to develop a financial strategy for the next five years.

Next Generation, the AFL Commission's strategy, will see \$1.4 billion allocated to all levels of the game from 2007-2011.

While others will judge whether or not we have been successful, one of our key objectives during the development of the *Next Generation* strategy was to find a responsible and prudent balance between providing for clubs and the competition today, and also investing in the next generation of supporters, participants, members and viewers.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership and counsel of our Chairman, Ron Evans, throughout the development of our *Next Generation* strategy.

He was a strong advocate of establishing a Future Fund as security and a foundation for the game during the next 10-20 years and for finding the right balance when allocating funds to the various stakeholders in our game.

As Chairman of our broadcasting sub-committee, he led an 18-month process that will maximise the coverage of our game throughout Australia, while also securing a financial outcome that has allowed the AFL Commission to invest in all levels of Australian Football.

In June, 2006, Ron received an Order of Australia in recognition of his service to business and commerce, Australian Football as a player and administrator and to the community through support of a number of charitable organisations.

We believe supporters of Australian Football at all levels will be the greatest beneficiaries of improved funding for clubs, players, game development and facilities.

NEW BREED: Young Bulldog Adam Cooney (right) was a standout against the Adelaide Crows in round 20, 2006, booting five goals and racking up 33 possessions.



Our supporters care deeply about the future of our game. The strength of their connection and their support for our game has given us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure the future of Australian Football.

The supporters want our game to remain affordable and accessible. They want 16 AFL clubs that are strong and stable both on and off the field. They want the best match-day experience, watching the best players. They want support for their schools, NAB AFL Auskick centres, and grassroots community clubs and leagues, and they want the game to keep on growing.

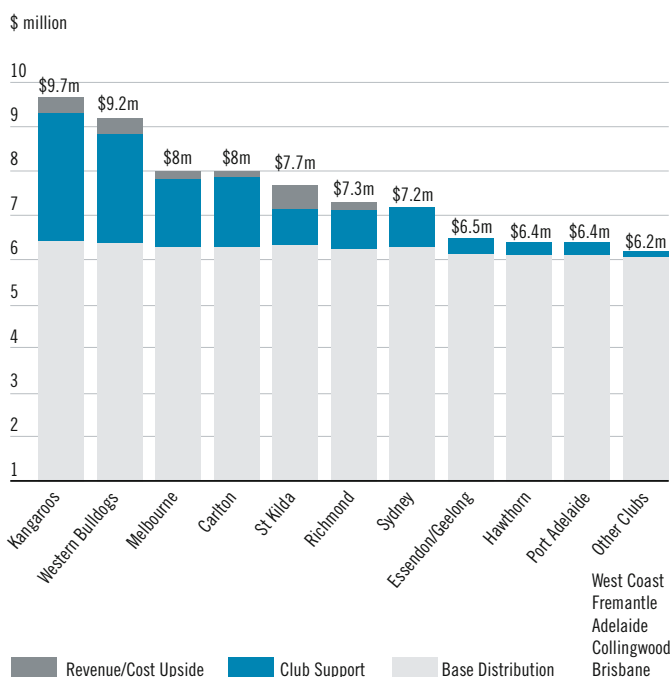
A direct benefit for supporters will be the freezing of general admission prices for Toyota AFL Premiership Season games and NAB Cup games in 2007.

Our strategy also recognises that some AFL clubs need more financial assistance than others. As a result in 2007, total distributions to clubs will range from \$9.7 million to the Kangaroos and \$9.2 million to the Western Bulldogs, to \$6.2 million to clubs including the West Coast Eagles, Collingwood, Fremantle, Adelaide and the Brisbane Lions.

This strategy provides the best opportunity for clubs to secure their future, but the AFL Commission recognises it is also vitally important to provide significant funding in the future to build the next generation of supporters. All levels of the football industry have helped to generate the record revenues and this strategy will return benefits to all levels of the game – and also build the participation and support needed to secure a healthy future for all levels of the game.

Significant support for disadvantaged clubs

Direct AFL Financial Support to each Club, 2007 (\$m)



As a result, total investment in game development and support for state and territory leagues will increase to \$208 million in 2007 – or 15 per cent of the total available funding.

We will continue to protect our football heartland, but we will also invest in accelerating the growth of the game in New South Wales and Queensland.

Quite simply, we want more people in more locations participating in, and experiencing, more Australian Football.

Twentieth season

The 2006 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was the 20th contested since the then-Victorian Football League Commission took the first steps to national expansion when the West Coast Eagles and Brisbane Bears entered the VFL competition in 1987. A table detailing the expansion of the national competition can be found on the opposite page.

Although there have been a host of challenges in the past 20 seasons – as there will be in the next 20 – the past year capitalised on the foundations laid by various administrators, including the late Jack Hamilton, Ross Oakley, Wayne Jackson and so many commissioners who have served the game so well since 1985 when the club-appointed directors effectively voted themselves out of office and appointed an independent board to administer our game. Last year, significant financial agreements were struck with broadcasters and corporate partners – agreements that have given us the opportunity to invest aggressively in our game.

Our Chairman, Ron Evans, has highlighted those key agreements in his report – television broadcasting rights with the Seven Network, Network Ten and Foxtel and new media rights with Telstra and radio rights arrangements that will generate approximately \$850 million during the next five years.

We also renewed our association with Toyota as our premier partner and renewed other agreements with the National Australia Bank, Foster's, Qantas, Sony Computer Entertainment, InterContinental Hotels Group, Kellogg's, City of Melbourne, Rebel Sport, Origin Energy and Sony Computer Entertainment.

We were also pleased to secure new partnerships with Medibank Private, Tabcorp, Belfair and Pedigree, bringing the total investment from all our corporate partners in the AFL to more than \$18 million. This does not include the investment in marketing, advertising and promotional activities by our corporate partners leveraging their association with the AFL and a wide range of programs.

The other key outcome in 2006 was the successful conclusion of negotiations with the AFL Players' Association for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period 2007-2011. This agreement will deliver benefits to players during this period of approximately \$790 million.

We will continue to place a great deal of importance on our key relationships – with our media partners, corporate sponsors, players, AFL clubs, the community football network, all levels of government and, most importantly, the supporters of our game. It is this foundation on which Australia's only Indigenous game is built.

Financial result

The AFL achieved a net profit before transfers to reserves of \$7.6 million, an increase of 16 per cent on 2005 and \$2.5 million above budget.

Other highlights:

- Revenue increased by \$12 million to \$215 million, up 6 per cent from 2005.
- Expenditure increased by \$3 million to \$72 million, up 4 per cent from 2005.
- Operating profit increased by \$10 million to \$140 million, up 8 per cent from 2005.
- Grants and distributions increased by \$9 million to \$133 million, up 7 per cent from 2005.
- Net borrowings at year-end of \$10.2 million, in line with our original five-year projections.

Twelve of the 16 AFL clubs were profitable in 2006, the same number as 2005. Aggregate club profitability was \$12.7 million, an increase of \$2.06 million on the 2005 figure.

Other key outcomes

- The 2006 Toyota AFL Premiership Season attendance of 6.204 million was the second highest tally on record, down 1.27 per cent on the record established in 2005 (6.28 million). Given that the MCG was unavailable until Anzac Day, this was another outstanding result.
- The 2006 finals attendance of 532,178 was up 11 per cent (52,000) on the 2005 finals attendance of 480,064.
- The combined premiership season and finals attendance of 6.74 million was only 27,600 less than 2005, a premiership season attendance record year.
- Club membership reached another record total of 519,126 after a sixth successive year of growth. This means that one in 39 Australians is a member of an AFL club.

- The average weekly national TV audience for each round of the premiership season was 3.94 million, 2 per cent lower than the record of 4.02 million set in 2005.
- The average unique browsers per month on the AFL/Telstra Network reached 1.51 million, up 27 per cent from 2005.
- Total participation in the game reached a record of 581,839 participants in 2006, up 7.8 per cent from 2005. This was the sixth successive year of growth off a record base the previous season.
- There was a further growth of 5.6 per cent in the NAB AFL Auskick program, with 147,371 participants in 2006. This was the eighth successive year of growth off a record base.

Carlton Football Club

The AFL Commission approved a \$2 million financial assistance package for Carlton Football Club in its bid to turn around the club's financial position.

The financial package consisted of:

- \$1.5 million as part of an interest-free loan, provided immediately to Carlton. This loan must be re-paid by October 31, 2008.
- A \$600,000 grant from Annual Special Distribution funding.

The financial assistance was subject to the following conditions:

- AFL Commissioner Mike Fitzpatrick to attend Carlton board meetings as an independent observer and to make his financial and corporate management expertise available to the board.
- Provision of specialist AFL consultant Jim Watts, former CEO of St Kilda Football Club, to work with the Carlton administration to develop an effective turnaround strategy.
- Preparation of a detailed annual business plan that clearly shows how the club would improve its financial position, and set itself on the path to a sustainable future.

1987-2006: 20 years since competition expanded

Key Measure	1987	2006
AFL revenue	\$23.2m	\$215m
Annual distribution to clubs	\$12.8m	\$96.6m
Clubs	14 – Fitzroy, no Adelaide, Port Adelaide, Fremantle	16
Club memberships	71,000	519,000
Premiership season crowds	2.9m	6.2m
Markets AFL games played in	Perth, Melbourne, Gold Coast, Sydney	Every mainland capital city plus Launceston, Darwin, Canberra, Gold Coast, Cairns
Stadiums	Whitten Oval, Victoria Park, WACA, Waverley Park, Moorabbin, Carrara	Over \$1.8b spent on stadiums: Telstra Stadium, Telstra Dome, Subiaco, AAMI Stadium, MCG, Aurora Stadium, Gabba
Total distributions to players	\$15.2m	\$132.5m
Players average wage	\$22,000	\$220,000
Sponsors	Sportsplay, Speedo	Toyota, NAB, Foster's, Coca-Cola, Qantas, Telstra, Sony
Media rights	\$5m (TV and radio)	\$85.8m (TV, new media, radio)
Auskick	11,000 in Vickick	147,000
Total participants	350,000	579,000

- Preparation of a budget showing significant financial improvement over the previous year.
- Provision of monthly financial statements to the AFL and a monthly meeting with AFL executives to ensure the budget and business plans are being achieved.
- Working with the AFL and other relevant parties to determine the best use of the MC Labour Park facility for the AFL industry.

The AFL's Respect and Responsibility policy

During the past year, we took two further initiatives linked to the AFL's Respect and Responsibility policy, which was introduced in November 2005 by the AFL Commission to address issues including attitudes and violence towards women.

The first initiative involved bringing Jackson Katz, one of America's leading authorities on promoting respect and responsibility for women and preventing gender violence, to Australia to conduct information and education sessions for staff from AFL clubs, state bodies and our organisation.

Mr Katz is the co-founder of the groundbreaking Mentors In Violence Prevention (MVP) program that provides gender violence prevention training and materials to colleges, sporting organisations, law enforcement agencies and the US military services.

The MVP program was the first large-scale attempt to enlist high school, collegiate and professional athletes in the fight against all forms of men's violence against women. Mr Katz has worked with tens of thousands of athletes.

He is also the director of the first worldwide domestic and sexual violence prevention program in the US Marine Corps and has worked with personnel from the US Navy, Air Force, Army and Coast Guard.

Current clients include two NFL teams – the New England Patriots, where he has worked for eight years, and the New York Jets – as well as several major college football programs.

Mr Katz and his colleague from the MVP program, Daryl Fort, conducted training and education sessions for 70 people over four days in Melbourne under our partnership with VicHealth.

Our other initiative was to appoint Dr Melanie Heenan as our Senior Project Officer to deliver the AFL's Respect and Responsibility policy. The key elements of the AFL's Respect and Responsibility policy are:

- The introduction of model anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its 16 clubs.
- The development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women.
- The review of AFL rules relating to conduct unbecoming to cover the specific context of allegations of sexual assault.
- The education of AFL players and other club officials with avenues being explored for dissemination of the program to the community level.
- The dissemination of model policies and procedures at the community club level.
- The development of a public education campaign.

MCG back to capacity

Although AFL matches could not be played at the MCG for the first four weeks of the 2006 Toyota AFL Premiership Season as a result of the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games being staged at the stadium, football supporters flocked to the first game – the Anzac Day clash between Essendon and Collingwood – which was a sell-out and attracted more than 91,000 people.



EYE ON THE PRIZE: (back row, from left) 2006 AFL club captains Warren Tredrea, Matthew Lloyd, Barry Hall, Steven King, Luke Darcy, Anthony Koutoufides, David Neitz and Adam Simpson; (front) Richie Vandenberg, Peter Bell, Mark Ricciuto, Nathan Buckley, Michael Voss, Chris Judd, Luke Ball and Kane Johnson.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Miles Kerindun (right) was part of an under-18 Indigenous team that toured South Africa in early 2006. The Australians played several matches, including one against Obed Pologanea and his North-West Province teammates.



In terms of the quality of facilities for supporters, players, coaches, members and the media, the Northern Stand at the MCG has set a new benchmark in Australian sport, and we wish to acknowledge the role of the MCG Trust, the Melbourne Cricket Club as ground manager, Grocon and all the workers involved, for their contribution to the project.

In 2006, 2.02 million people attended 42 premierships season matches at the MCG with an average attendance per game of 48,044, while three finals, including the Grand Final, were attended by a further 249,243 people.

Since the Great Southern Stand opened in 1992 and the MCG became the home of AFL membership and our major venue, an average of 50 premierships season games per year have been played at the MCG with an average attendance per game of 45,706 people.

In addition, an average of five finals matches per year have been played at the MCG since 1992 with an average attendance of 71,585.

More than 40 million people have attended AFL matches at the MCG since 1992.

Jeff Browne

The AFL's long-serving legal advisor and consultant, Jeff Browne, resigned during 2006 from his legal firm, Browne and Co., to take up the position of Executive Director with the Nine Network.

Jeff has given outstanding service to the AFL and many of our clubs for more than 20 years, and been involved in every major initiative undertaken by the AFL Commission in that time, including the introduction of the draft and salary cap, development of player rules, negotiation of broadcasting rights agreements, development of major policies including racial and religious vilification, respect and responsibility and anti-doping code, entry of clubs to the competition since 1987 and agreements with various AFL venues around Australia.

His outstanding contribution to the game was recognised in 2004 when he was awarded Life Membership.

Browne and Co. continues to act as the AFL's legal advisor.

Ben Buckley

Our Chief Operating Officer, Ben Buckley, resigned in October, 2006, after being appointed CEO of the Football Federation of Australia, replacing John O'Neill who resigned earlier in the year. For his career, it was the right decision, and we wish him every success in his new role.

We are disappointed to lose Ben from our organisation. He had made a first-class contribution since 1999 when he was appointed General Manager, Commercial Operations, by my predecessor Wayne Jackson.

When I was appointed CEO by the AFL Commission in October 2003, Ben accepted new responsibilities as General Manager, Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects.

For two years, he led the planning and preparation for the negotiation of our broadcast rights agreement with the Seven Network and Network Ten, which was concluded in January, 2006, and set a new benchmark in Australian sport for rights fees and the extent of national coverage.

In strategic planning, Ben played a leading role in the development of our *Next Generation* strategy and our plans for the key growth market of south-east Queensland, including the agreement for the Kangaroos to play 10 home games at Gold Coast Stadium over the next three years.

Toyota AFL Grand Final

Fittingly, the 2006 Toyota AFL Grand Final between the West Coast Eagles and the Sydney Swans was the on-field highlight of the year. It was also the third successive season in which two non-Victorian clubs had contested the Grand Final.

The Eagles' victory by one point was only the third Grand Final in 110 years to be decided by the narrowest possible margin. It was also a fitting end to the Eagles' 20th season in the competition, during which time they have become a highly regarded club on and off the field.

The Swans and the Eagles have developed an extraordinary rivalry, with their last five meetings – including two Grand Finals, two qualifying finals and their round-15 game in Perth in 2006 – being decided by a total of 12 points. Neither club has won successive matches against each other during this period.

The final scores in the Grand Final – 12.13 (85) to 12.12 (84) in favour of the Eagles – mirrored the total points the two clubs posted in the first week of the finals at Subiaco Oval except, on that occasion, the Swans prevailed, 13.7 (85) to 12.12 (84).

If anyone believes our game is not physical in the true meaning of the word, then matches between the Eagles and Swans are recommended viewing, because they display all the great attributes of Australian Football played at the highest level – skill, fiercely contested possession, courage, speed and relentless pressure. Importantly, it is also obvious through the interaction of the players from both clubs at the end of each game that they have the greatest respect for their opponents.

An average national television audience of 3.2 million in the five mainland capital cities watched the 2006 Grand Final, making it the second most-watched television program of the year, only behind the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games.

Together with the audience in regional television markets, a total of 4.2 million people watched the Grand Final.

We congratulate West Coast Chairman Dalton Gooding, CEO Trevor Nisbett, Football Manager Steve Woodhouse, coach John Worsfold, the players, administration and support staff for the club's high level of performance during 2006.

Since John was appointed coach for the 2002 season, the Eagles have participated in the finals every season, including the last two Grand Finals.

For the Sydney Swans, the 2006 season was the ninth time in the past 11 years that the club has reached the finals. We also wish to congratulate Sydney Chairman Richard Colless, CEO Myles Baron-Hay, General Manager, Football Andrew Ireland, coach Paul Roos, the players, administration and support staff for another outstanding season. Since Paul was appointed coach midway through the 2002 season, the Swans have participated in the finals in each of the past four years.



Andrew Demetriou,
Chief Executive Officer

AT A STRETCH: Melbourne dynamo Aaron Davey flies for a spectacular grab over sprawling Tiger Joel Bowden.





BROADCASTING, STRATEGY AND MAJOR PROJECTS

GENERAL MANAGER — BEN BUCKLEY

(RESIGNED OCTOBER, 2006)

Collingwood captain Nathan Buckley made a solid return from a serious hamstring injury to lead his Magpies to the 2006 finals.

TAKING THE CODE EVEN FURTHER

The completion of television, radio and new media agreements will play a significant role in shaping the game's future.

The completion of television, new media and radio rights agreements were the key focus of the Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects Department during 2006.

While the detail of these agreements is covered earlier in this report, the negotiations produced a record outcome for the AFL competition of nearly \$850 million for the period 2007-2011.

Our television rights agreement with the Seven and Ten networks and Foxtel is valued at \$780 million for the next five years, including a cash component of \$690 million, a 70 per cent increase on the previous agreement which included cash of \$405 million from 2002-2006.

Seven and Ten secured the rights to broadcast eight premierships season games a week on free-to-air television from 2007-2011 and the right to sub-licence up to four games a week to a pay television broadcaster. Agreement was subsequently reached with Foxtel to broadcast four games per week. Importantly, the reach of the telecasts will mean more people throughout Australia will have access to AFL broadcasts in prime-time than ever before.

Under the agreement with Seven, Ten and Foxtel the AFL made a slight alteration to its weekly schedule from 2007, with twilight games now a regular feature every Sunday. There will be 10 played in Victoria and 13 outside Victoria, including Subiaco matches starting at 2.40pm WST (4.40pm EST).

Apart from the four rounds affected by public holidays (Easter, Anzac Day and Queen's Birthday) or the split round, the weekly schedule will be as follows:

- Friday night – one game.
- Saturday afternoon – two games.
- Saturday night – two games.
- Sunday early – one game.
- Sunday afternoon – one game.
- Sunday twilight – one game.

This spread of games will allow as many supporters as possible to view AFL games, taking into account competing demands for supporters' time such as work, local sport, extended shopping hours and other forms of entertainment and recreation. It is also geared towards allowing those involved in grassroots football to be able to watch AFL games on a regular basis.

New media

The AFL's new media partnership with Telstra will continue from 2007-2011 under a rights agreement worth \$60 million, a 200 per cent increase on the previous agreement.

The AFL and Telstra BigPond will provide AFL supporters in Australia and overseas with an increased level of coverage through cutting-edge broadband and Next G mobile content.

Announcement of the new agreement coincided with the launch of Telstra's Next G network, providing state-of-the-art mobile and wireless broadband coverage. Fans will be able to access the 2007 Toyota AFL Premiership Season in full digital quality via BigPond on mobiles, PCs, laptops and other devices.

The AFL's website, afl.com.au, is the most popular sporting website in Australia with unique browsers averaging more than 1.51 million per month in 2006, up 27 per cent on 2005.

BigPond will deliver the following to fans:

- Full match replays available 12 hours after the final siren, instead of the previous 24 hours.
- In-quarter and post-quarter highlights packages.
- Extended match highlights packages.
- Video downloads that can be transferred to portable devices.
- Special features such as fantasy football, trivia, tipping, a ladder predictor and content from the clubs.

Radio rights

Radio rights agreements totalling \$8.24 million were secured with various broadcasters for 2007-2009. This represents a 250 per cent increase in radio rights fees, which totalled \$2.34 million from 2004-2006.

The AFL's radio rights agreements for the Victorian market were concluded with the ABC, 3AW, the Triple M Network and new partner SEN 1116. The ABC also has the right to broadcast nationally.

Triple M will also broadcast Sydney Swans games in Sydney and Brisbane Lions games in Brisbane.

For the first time, every match of every club in the competition will be broadcast into its home city. All Victorian-based teams were guaranteed radio coverage for every away match outside Victoria for the first time in the history of the national competition.

The AFL also finalised agreements with Perth-based station 6PR for matches broadcast into Western Australia, with 5AA in Adelaide for broadcasts into South Australia, and with the National Indigenous Radio Service.

The various media agreements were the culmination of more than two years work by the department in assessing the value of the rights, monitoring developments in technology, reviewing strategies of other sports around the world and negotiating agreements.

KEY MEDIA PARTNERS: The Nine Network, Network Ten, the Fox Footy Channel and News Limited provided broad coverage of the game nationally in 2006.





WINNING STRATEGY: The completion of media agreements and revitalised club facilities are examples of the game's continued growth – Matt Granland from radio station 3AW interviews Essendon's Scott Lucas; the view from the recently completed Reg Hickey Stand at Skilled Stadium in Geelong; Network Ten's Christi Malthouse with Melbourne's Aaron Davey, and the state-of-the-art gymnasium at Waverley Park, Hawthorn's new administrative and training base.

Next Generation strategy

In conjunction with the finance and administration department, the broadcasting, strategy and major projects department's other significant responsibility was development of the AFL Commission's *Next Generation* financial strategy.

A key objective of the strategy was to find a responsible and prudent balance between providing for clubs and the competition today and also investing in building the next generation of supporters, participants, members and viewers for tomorrow.

The strategy, announced in September, will invest \$1.4 billion in all levels of the game from 2007-2011.

Growth markets

The allocation of \$20 million from 2007-2011 for the key growth markets of south-east Queensland and the greater west of Sydney was a key component of the *Next Generation* strategy.

Queensland is projecting rapid population growth to 5.6 million people by 2026 and 7.1 million by 2051 and will be Australia's second largest market behind NSW.

South-east Queensland is projecting a population of at least 3 million people by 2015.

By 2015, the AFL Commission has an objective of having an AFL premiership season game played each week in south-east Queensland and Sydney.

In 2006, agreement was reached between the AFL and the Kangaroos to play 10 premiership season games on the Gold Coast from 2007-2009.

The Gold Coast City Council is a key partner in this project, having invested \$2 million in the first stage of the redevelopment of the Gold Coast Stadium at Carrara in 2006 and a further \$500,000 in 2007. The AFL contributed a further \$1 million to the first stage of the upgrade.

Our partnership with the Gold Coast City Council also included the development of a longer term master plan for the Gold Coast Stadium.

The AFL is investing for the long-term in the Gold Coast so that more people watch, play and attend Australian Football and for our game to play an even greater role in community life on the Gold Coast for decades to come.

A working group with representatives from the AFL, AFL Queensland, the Kangaroos and the Brisbane Lions is implementing the strategy for south-east Queensland.

In conjunction with AFL Queensland, we are increasing our staffing on the Gold Coast to:

- Grow the game at the community level and double participation through stronger presence in schools, community leagues and clubs.
- Work with our partners to improve facilities at community level for our participants, volunteers and supporters.
- Build an active membership and corporate supporter base.
- Work on plans to further redevelop Gold Coast Stadium at Carrara.
- Successfully stage premiership season games for the Kangaroos.

With the Kangaroos playing home games on the Gold Coast, agreement was then reached with the ACT Government for the Western Bulldogs and Melbourne to play a home game at Manuka Oval in Canberra.

The Western Bulldogs and Melbourne Football Clubs will each play one Toyota AFL premiership season match per season at Manuka from 2007-2009 as part of a four-game package in the Canberra region.

The other games will include a pre-season NAB Cup match and a NAB Regional Challenge match at Manuka to retain the AFL's presence in Canberra and its position of being the only national code with games in each state and territory.

Greater west of Sydney

The framework for the growth of the game in the greater west of Sydney was established in 2006 with an initial phase focusing on building Australian Football at a community level.

Work on a \$21 million facility for Australian Football and cricket at Blacktown Olympic Park started in 2006. This project is a key component of the AFL's longer term plans for the greater west and is the result of a partnership with the NSW Government, City of Blacktown and Cricket NSW.

Two AFL-standard grounds will be part of the complex when it opens in 2008.

Facility Development Reserve

The Facility Development Reserve established by the AFL Commission continued to provide funding in partnership with state and local governments for facility projects at various levels of the game in 2006.

AFL club facilities

The AFL committed \$13.3 million to a \$55 million fund with the Victorian Government, local councils and AFL clubs to inject new life into former suburban AFL grounds and revitalise them as focal points for their local communities.

The Victorian Premier Steve Bracks announced the Government would contribute \$14 million to the Victorian AFL club facilities funding program.

AFL clubs to benefit from the program will include Richmond (Punt Road Oval), Carlton (MC Labour Park), St Kilda (Moorabbin Reserve), Essendon (Windy Hill), Hawthorn (Waverley Park) and the Kangaroos (Arden Street Oval).

Victoria Park, the former home of Collingwood, will also be renovated and retained for use as a training venue for VFL umpires and as a ground for TAC Cup matches.

Funding for the program includes contributions from the following:

■ Victorian Government	\$17 million
■ AFL	\$13.3 million
■ Local councils	\$17.8 million
■ Clubs	\$20.9 million
■ TOTAL	\$69 million

The AFL and the Victorian Government have also contributed to the \$26 million upgrade to Skilled Stadium at Geelong and the \$17 million redevelopment of Whitten Oval.

AFL venues

As part of its strategy to do all it reasonably can to assist with the provision of the best possible facilities at AFL venues for supporters, clubs, players and the media, the AFL Commission has agreed in principle to contribute to the redevelopment of the SCG in Sydney, Subiaco Oval in Perth and AAMI Stadium in Adelaide. The amount to be contributed to each project will be determined during 2007.

The AFL has been working closely with the Western Australian Football Commission and the Western Australian Government on future plans for Subiaco Oval or the development of a new stadium at a different site.

A task force appointed by the Western Australian Government to consider various options for a multi-purpose stadium in Perth is due to lodge its final report in 2007.

Community facilities

Through the Facility Development Reserve, the AFL contributed \$400,000 to a \$4.5 million project by the Shire of Baulkham Hills for the East Coast Eagles in Sydney.

A further 21 facility projects at country football and netball clubs in Victoria were approved in 2006 bringing the total to 75 projects worth \$4.5 million, which have proceeded during the past two years under a joint funding program between the AFL, Victorian Government and various regional councils.

Under the *Next Generation* strategy, \$12.5 million has been allocated for other community facility projects.



LOOK OF THE FUTURE: An artist's impression of what Gold Coast Stadium, Carrara, could look like in the future. The Kangaroos will play 10 premierships season matches at the venue from 2007-2009. The ground was recently upgraded, with the AFL and other key parties investigating options for its long-term development.

Strategic Partnership Fund

In 2006, the AFL Commission established the Strategic Partnership Fund. The objective of this fund is to support joint projects between the AFL, clubs and state bodies to deliver new growth and improvement solutions for the football industry.

All clubs and states are eligible for funding, and the learnings from all projects are transferable across the industry.

The AFL Commission approved \$1.3 million in funding for 10 projects in 2006, including:

- Development of a customer relationship management strategy for the industry.
- Fan development and new school programs.
- Club IT business systems review.
- Ticketing and membership improvement initiatives.
- Revenue improvement initiatives.

Television audiences

A cumulative audience of nearly 4 million people per week watched AFL matches on television during the 2006 Toyota AFL Premiership Season in the five mainland capital cities. The average per round of 3.94 million was down 2 per cent on the record weekly cumulative audience established in 2005.

On average, another 1.17 million people per week watched telecasts of AFL matches in regional Australia.

The Toyota AFL Grand Final between the West Coast and Sydney was again the most watched AFL match of the year with an average audience in the five mainland capital cities of 3.15 million people.

When the audience in regional Australia is added, some 4.15 million people in Australia watched the 2006 Grand Final on Network Ten.

The average audience in the five mainland capital cities also meant the Grand Final was the second most watched television program of any type in 2006, behind only the telecast of the Commonwealth Games' opening ceremony.

Other national audiences, including regional markets, for the 2006 Toyota AFL finals were as follows:

- Sydney-Fremantle preliminary final – average audience of 2.22 million people.
- Adelaide-West Coast preliminary final – average audience of 1.93 million people.
- Fremantle-Melbourne semi-final – average audience of 1.68 million people.
- West Coast-Western Bulldogs semi-final – average audience of 1.61 million people.
- West Coast-Sydney qualifying final – average audience of 1.75 million people.
- Adelaide-Fremantle qualifying final – average audience of 1.57 million people.
- Melbourne-St Kilda elimination final – average audience of 1.58 million people.
- Collingwood-Western Bulldogs elimination final – average audience of 1.52 million people.

Including the Grand Final, a cumulative audience of 18.1 million people watched the 2006 finals, down 1.6 per cent on the 2005 cumulative national audience (18.3 million people).

The six most watched matches from the 2006 Toyota AFL Premiership Season in metropolitan and regional markets were as follows:

- Collingwood-Essendon (round five) – average of 1.64 million viewers.
- Brisbane Lions-Sydney Swans (round six) – average of 1.24 million viewers.
- Collingwood-Brisbane Lions (round nine) – average of 1.17 million viewers.
- Melbourne-Collingwood (round 11) average of 1.17 million viewers.
- St Kilda-Brisbane Lions (round three) – average of 1.16 million viewers.
- St Kilda-Fremantle (round five) – average of 1.14 million viewers.

AFL fixture

The 2007 AFL fixture was the first to be prepared by the department using software provided by Optimal Planning Solutions, a Canadian-based company specialising in sports scheduling.

Clients of Optimal Planning Solutions include the National Football League, National Basketball League, Arena Football League in the United States, and the Eredivisie, the Dutch soccer league.

The software reduced the amount of time for the AFL to prepare its fixture from three months starting immediately after round 15 when every club had played each other once, to about four weeks.

At the start of the fixture process, the AFL pre-loaded up to 12 key variables into the program. To put the scope of the program into context, the software chooses 176 matches from a possible 68,000 options.

Fixturing principles

The AFL's six guiding principles for developing the fixture each year are as follows:

1. To develop, as close as is possible, a draw that gives all clubs, no matter what position on the ladder, equal opportunities.
2. To maximise crowds at all AFL matches in all markets.
3. To maximise television audiences across our broadcast partners and to ensure maximum exposure of the AFL competition nationally.
4. To take into account the specific requests of AFL clubs and other stakeholders – players, venues, etc.
5. To continue to develop the AFL competition nationally by programming, where possible, as many teams across all markets throughout the season.
6. To ensure the welfare of the players and provide minimum six-day breaks between matches for regularly scheduled rounds.



FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

GENERAL MANAGER – ADRIAN ANDERSON

Port Adelaide's Chad Cornes enjoyed another consistent season,
finishing fourth in the club's best and fairest award.

MAINTAINING OUR SPECTACULAR GAME

Rules governing the way the game is played and administered must ensure safety for participants, equality for all players and clubs, and enjoyment for spectators.

The Football Operations Department again took steps to ensure our game continues to be played in a spectacular and exciting manner, while also preventing injuries for all players at every level of the game.

In 2006, the department oversaw key changes to the Laws of the Game – three new rules and seven interpretation changes – to ensure the game retains its unique qualities into the future.

From 2007, a player with his head over the ball, and in a vulnerable position, will be further protected with the introduction of a new law banning front-on contact from a bump.

The AFL continued to be a community leader with the AFL's Illicit Drug Code endorsed by the Victorian Supreme Court in 2006 – an extra initiative to attack illicit drug use now being followed by other sports.

The AFL and the AFLPA signed off on a further five years of the Collective Bargaining Agreement in 2006, to ensure industrial harmony within the game between the players and the administration.

The overhaul of the Match Review Panel and the AFL Tribunal system received great support at the end of its first year and was fine-tuned on the basis of feedback on its first year of operation.

Laws of the Game

The core objective of the AFL Commission and the Laws of the Game committee is to enhance and maintain the appeal of the AFL for spectators and players and to prevent injuries so far as can be reasonably achieved in a body contact sport.

For 2006, the Football Operations Department oversaw the introduction of three new rules and seven key interpretation changes, after long-term research had shown the game was trending towards more of a stop-start game, with a greater density of players around the ball, fewer contested marks and greater likelihood of collision injuries.

The focus at administrative level was to see a more continuous style of play, with fewer players around the ball and a reduction in the likelihood of high-impact collision injuries.

After these changes, the 2006 season, as against recent years, demonstrated more continuous play, more football in action, less congestion and time lost in stoppages and a halt to the long-term downward trend in contested marks. The 2006 finals series produced some of the most memorable football in recent times.

For 2007, the AFL Commission has approved one change to the Laws of the Game to provide greater protection for a player with his head over the ball.

Under Rule 15.4.5, a free kick will apply wherever a player bumps or makes forceful contact from front-on when that player has his head down over the ball. Further, under Rule 19.2.2 that “intentionally, recklessly or negligently bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that player has his head down over the ball” will be a reportable offence and strict sanctions will be applicable.

The change was made to provide greater protection for players who are playing the ball and by minimising the likelihood of serious spinal injury.

Two interpretation changes will also be enforced: stricter policing of hands in the back in marking contests and dangerous tackles, such as those where a player is unnecessarily and dangerously driven into the ground with their arms pinned.

The Laws of the Game committee and the AFL Commission had access to detailed information on which to base their final decisions: *The AFL Report on Injuries*, game research tracking both game speed and player density around the ball, player movement tracking, an evaluation of NAB Cup trial rules, evaluation of VFL trial rules, fan surveys and key stakeholder feedback from clubs, umpires and state leagues.

The research indicated the game has become more continuous, and was significantly more continuous in 2006 than in 2005:

- Less stoppage time (fewer stops of lesser time).
- The percentage of time the ball is in play was higher.
- The average play period was longer.
- Elimination of PCL injuries to ruckmen at centre bounce contests.
- Number of contested marks stabilised for the first time in many years.

Other trends were also identified, which will require further examination:

- Continued increase in short possession-style of football, (keepings-off approach).
- More short kicks and uncontested marks.
- Continued increases in the use of the interchange bench.

Illicit Drug Policy

The AFL's Illicit Drug Policy was introduced in 2005 to supplement the AFL's WADA-compliant Anti-Doping Code. It is an extra initiative to proactively tackle the dangers of illicit drugs, a major social issue in the community.

In 2006, the approach taken by the AFL and the AFLPA was endorsed by the Victorian Supreme Court when an injunction was obtained to prevent some media outlets from publishing the names of players who were undergoing education and counselling as part of the policy.

SAFER: Collingwood's Guy Richards and Hawthorn's Robert Campbell battle in the ruck. The AFL's new centre-square ruck rules have helped eliminate serious knee injuries to the game's big men at centre bounces.



The AFL's Illicit Drug Policy was developed on the advice of the Australian Drug Foundation and leading experts in the field and involves testing players for marijuana, cocaine and ecstasy outside match day – testing over and above WADA requirements and testing currently not done by any other governing sports body in Australia.

A key element to this process was to provide a player found to have transgressed with confidential counselling.

In the Victorian Supreme Court, Justice Murray Kellam accepted that the IDP reflected “a ground-breaking, innovative and co-operative initiative between a major sporting administration body and a player representative body directed at proactively addressing illicit drug use in a manner designed to protect the health and welfare of players and others while simultaneously condemning and recognising the potential harm involved with the use or possession of illicit drugs.”

The AFL has the most comprehensive attack on drugs of any sporting code in the country, going above and beyond the mandatory requirements of the WADA code, with other sports now seeking to adopt a similar approach.

In the area of performance-enhancing drugs, the AFL is fully committed to a zero-tolerance policy. The AFLPA and the medical staff continue to educate all players about the dangers of drugs.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The successful negotiation of the AFL's television broadcast rights required the completion of a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the AFL and the AFLPA on behalf of all AFL players as the highest priority for continued stability within the game.

A new CBA would enable the AFL to then plan its long-term financial strategy and a five-year agreement through to 2011 was confirmed on player payments and related benefits.

The confirmation of industrial harmony within the game then enabled the AFL to push for unprecedented national growth via its *Next Generation* strategy.

The key elements of the CBA were:

- A five-year agreement (2007-2011).
- Increases in the competition-wide Total Player Payments (TPP) of 7.3 per cent in 2007 and 7 per cent in 2008, followed by 3.5 per cent in 2009, 3.3 per cent in 2010 and 3.3 per cent in 2011, resulting in an overall increase in the salary cap of about 25 per cent over the five years.
- An increase in the minimum wage and prescribed payments for first- and second-year players of 10 per cent in 2007.
- An increase in minimum rookie payment of about 15 per cent in 2007.
- \$25 million to support all players with personal services, education and training opportunities and other related health and welfare initiatives over the term of the agreement.
- The introduction of more than \$1 million in prizemoney to be shared by players representing teams participating in the AFL finals series each year.
- The allocation of about \$2 million to a past player health and wellbeing fund, for past players experiencing health-related hardship. The TPP figures for seasons 2007-2011 are outlined on page 129.

Match Review Panel and AFL Tribunal

The changes to the AFL's judicial system in 2005 were the largest in the history of the game. The feedback on the first year of operations of the Match Review Panel and Tribunal panel was overwhelmingly positive and clubs and players stressed the importance of many key aspects of the new system:

- Players able to accept a penalty without a Tribunal hearing.
- Greater consistency in the handling of reports and charges with the Match Review Panel determining all charges, rather than any of 32 umpires, video reports officer or investigator.
- Greater transparency through public release of a table of offences.
- Support for decisions being made by a jury of former players.
- Strong support for the availability of legal counsel for players.
- Strong support for the restriction on victim player evidence.
- Technology and Tribunal venue found to have significantly improved.
- Taking significant pressure off umpires who were previously required to review videos and lay charges.
- The 25 per cent discount for an early plea should remain when a player successfully pleads guilty to a lesser charge.
- Inclusion of fixed fines for melees and wrestling was the best way to deal with these charges. About 80 per cent of players opted to accept the sanctions allocated by the Match Review Panel.

Key outcomes

	2004	2005	2006
Charges	173	150	137
Tribunal hearings	123	26	32
Matches lost through suspension	117	77	71
Appeals	12	5	4
Financial sanctions	\$223,100	\$108,600	\$66,900
Cases involving player (victim) evidence	108	9	4
Hearings/appeals involving legal representation	0	15	21
Reprimands (includes offences <100 points)	0	21	36

Changes for the 2006 season, made after responses from all sections of the football community, were:

- Reduced weighting of prior offences.
- Players no longer disqualified from a good record if their only offence(s) resulted in financial sanctions.
- Further categories of misconduct included on the Table of Offences.
- More time for acceptance of an early plea, enabling non-Victorian clubs in particular greater time to assess a charge.
- The definitions of intentional/reckless/negligent/behind play revisited.
- The time period for calculation of prior records clarified.
- The jury bound by the Table of Offences if it reclassified an offence determined by the Match Review Panel.
- Further improvement of the technology available at the Tribunal.

Match Review Panel summary

Club	Players charged	No. of charges	Total pts under 1 match	Suspended	Fined
Adelaide	3	3	1	1 (1 match)	1 (\$900)
Brisbane Lions	3	3		2 (3 matches)	1 (\$900)
Carlton	7	12	2	2 (2 matches)	8 (\$16,200)
Collingwood	8	9	2	2 (2 matches)	5 (\$7500)
Essendon	7	9	3	4 (6 matches)	2 (\$4200)
Fremantle	10	12	3	2 (2 matches)	7 (\$10,800)
Geelong	4	7	2	4 (6 matches)	1 (\$900)
Hawthorn	5	6	3	2 (5 matches)	1 (\$900)
Kangaroos	4	4	3		1 (\$900)
Melbourne	9	10	1	2 (3 matches)	7 (\$8100)
Port Adelaide	2	2	1	1 (1 match)	
Richmond	3	5	1	2 (2 matches)	2 (\$1800)
St Kilda	8	9	2	2 (2 matches)	5 (\$8700)
Sydney Swans	3	3	1		2 (\$1800)
West Coast Eagles	3	4	2	2 (3 matches)	
Western Bulldogs	6	7	3	2 (4 matches)	2 (\$3300)
Totals	85	105	30	30 (42 matches)	45 (\$66,900)

Summary of AFL Tribunal hearings

Club	Players charged	No. of charges	Total pts under 1 match	Suspended	Not sustained
Adelaide	1	1		1 (2 matches)	
Brisbane Lions					
Carlton	1	1			1
Collingwood	2	2	1	1 (6 matches)	
Essendon	4	4	1	2 (4 matches)	1
Fremantle	5	7	1	3 (5 matches)	3
Geelong	4	5	1	2 (2 matches)	2
Hawthorn	1	1		1 (4 matches)	
Kangaroos	1	1		1 (1 match)	
Melbourne	1	1			1
Port Adelaide	3	3	1	1 (1 match)	
Richmond	3	3	1	1 (1 match)	1
St Kilda	2	2		1 (2 matches)	1
Sydney Swans					
West Coast Eagles	1	1		1 (1 match)	
Western Bulldogs					
Totals	29	32	6	15 (29 matches)	11

The AFL Tribunal did not issue any fines in 2006.

AFL Tribunal summary

Club	Players charged	No. of charges	Total points under 1 match	Suspended	Fined	Not sustained
Adelaide	4	4	1	2 (3 matches)	1 (\$900)	-
Brisbane Lions	3	3	-	2 (3 matches)	1 (\$900)	-
Carlton	8	13	2	2 (2 matches)	8 (\$16,200)	1
Collingwood	8	11	3	3 (8 matches)	5 (\$7500)	-
Essendon	11	13	4	6 (11 matches)	2 (\$4200)	1
Fremantle	12	19	4	5 (7 matches)	7 (\$10,800)	3
Geelong	7	12	3	6 (8 matches)	1 (\$900)	2
Hawthorn	6	7	3	3 (9 matches)	1 (\$900)	-
Kangaroos	5	5	3	1 (1 match)	1 (\$900)	-
Melbourne	10	11	1	2 (3 matches)	7 (\$8100)	1
Port Adelaide	5	5	2	2 (2 matches)	-	1
Richmond	6	8	2	3 (3 matches)	2 (\$1800)	1
St Kilda	8	11	2	3 (4 matches)	5 (\$8700)	1
Sydney Swans	3	3	1		2 (\$1800)	-
West Coast Eagles	3	5	2	3 (4 matches)	-	-
Western Bulldogs	6	7	3	2 (4 matches)	2 (\$3300)	-
Totals	105	137	36	45 (71 matches)	45 (\$66,900)	11

Types of reports

Charge	No.
Striking	52
Wrestling	25
Rough conduct	19
Engaging in a melee	15
Attempt to strike	5
Making contact with umpire	3
Tripping	5
Misconduct (threatening behaviour)	1
Misconduct (spitting)	1
Misconduct (contact with head including face)	2
Charging	4
Attempt to trip	1
Abusive language	3
Obscene gesture	1
Total	137

(Does not include reports that were withdrawn).

Umpiring department implements new rules

The senior AFL umpiring list was set a strong challenge from the AFL Commission and Laws of the Game committee in 2006 to apply the new rules and interpretations aimed at creating more playing time and more continuous action in AFL matches, as outlined earlier in this report.

Rules

1. Remove the requirement to wait for flags to be waved before bringing the ball back into play after a behind.
2. Allow a shot at goal from directly in front if mark taken or free kick awarded in the goal square.
3. Automatic restart of time-on from the time umpire crosses arms to when the ball is bounced or thrown up.

Interpretation modifications

1. Limit time for players to line up set shots for goal (call play-on after a warning and 30 seconds).
2. Reduced tolerance for holding players up after mark or free kick (50-metre penalty).
3. Quicker throw-ins.
4. Less time taken to award 50-metre penalty.
5. Stricter interpretation for deliberate kick out of bounds.
6. Stricter policing of holding and blocking in marking contests.
7. Focus on detection of infringements by taggers.

The umpiring department informed all key stakeholders of the changes via presentations to players, coaches, umpires, the media and other relevant groups.

The department created and distributed a DVD, outlining the changes with examples and explanations, and nearly 8000 copies were distributed across Australia. Every AFL player, umpire and coach received a DVD as a reference resource.

All 110 contracted AFL umpires, umpiring coaches, observers and state managers attended a seminar conducted by the department, laying the foundation for a successful season in the critical areas of consistency in decision making and management of games.

Away from football, the AFL umpires also volunteered their time in two new projects co-ordinated by AFL Foundation CEO Derek Linsell.

- Young people with Down syndrome from the Victorian Down Syndrome Association were invited to be involved in games at Telstra Dome, assisting the umpires' trainers and the umpires during games.
- A group of AFL umpires also offered their services to work as mentors to young people from the Wesley Mission Melbourne. The people involved were invited to the football and attended umpire training to experience sport/life at an elite level.

The key highlights of the season were:

- Strong performances by the Grand Final umpires – Brett Allen, Darren Goldspink, Michael Vozzo (field), Jonathon Creasey, Darren Wilson, Adam Coote (boundary umpires) and Mark Canning and David Flegg (goal).
- Allen was named the All-Australian umpire for the fourth time, after previously being recognised in 1999, 2000 and 2002.
- Shane McInerney was appointed to officiate in the International Rules Series in Ireland, assisted by Darren Goldspink.

Milestones reached:

350 games – Darren Goldspink
 250 games – Matthew Vitiritti (boundary) and Steve Sterling (goal)
 200 games – Martin Ellis (field) and Shane McInerney (field)
 100 games – Scott Jeffery (field), Matthew Head (field), Derek Woodcock (field), Jonathon Creasey and Andrew Curtis, Peter Gonis and Ante Perkovic (goal).



ON THE BALL: Chris Donlon was one of 32 senior umpires to officiate in AFL matches in 2006.

AFL field umpires' senior panel, 2006

Name	Total	06 Games	Name	Total	06 Games
Allen, Brett	326	25	McBurney, Stephen	236	23
Avon, Michael	114	13	McInerney, Shane	219	22
Chamberlain, Ray	41	20	McLaren, Scott	274	21
Davis, Adam	39	7	Meredith, Simon	50	19
Donlon, Chris	25	15	Nicholls, Kieron	124	15
Ellis, Martin	204	22	Nicholls, Mathew	52	12
Fraser, Mark	5	0	Pannell, Troy	26	13
Goldspink, Darren	359	25	Quigley, Jason	48	15
Grun, Stefan	42	18	Rosebury, Brett	97	20
Head, Matthew	106	19	Sully, Damien	10	10
Hendrie, Craig	35	8	Ryan, Shaun	86	23
James, Mathew	154	17	Schmitt, Justin	154	23
Jeffery, Scott	106	20	Stevic, Matt	50	18
Kamolins, Chris	20	12	Vozzo, Michael	166	25
Kennedy, Hayden	389	23	Wenn, Stuart	193	20
Margetts, Dean	72	15	Woodcock, Derek	113	20

St Kilda-Fremantle match

Following a protest by Fremantle Football Club, Adrian Anderson, General Manager, Football Operations, called upon the AFL Commission to determine the official result of the round five match between St Kilda and Fremantle, played at Launceston on Sunday, April 30.

The Commission received detailed submissions from both clubs, coupled with an investigative report from the Football Operations Department, in relation to the circumstances surrounding the finish of the game.

It was determined the match finished immediately after the first siren sounded, ruling that Fremantle won the match, with the club to be awarded the full four points.

AFL Commission Chairman Ron Evans stated deliberations were guided by:

- The correct interpretation of the Laws of the Game and the AFL rules, and
- The objective of our game, that is, to ensure that Australian Football is played in a fair manner and the spirit of true sportsmanship.

The Commission found that but for the extraordinary circumstances that existed at the end of this match, the umpire would have given the appropriate signal to end the match.

The AFL accepted full responsibility for what occurred and unreservedly apologised to the clubs involved, the players and all football fans.

To ensure such an incident was not repeated, the Commission instructed the potential for error in the future must be minimised. It directed that:

1. All AFL timekeepers be instructed about their obligations and reminded of the process in correctly signalling the end of each quarter and their obligations and requirements under the rules.
2. An immediate review of the siren and audio system at each AFL venue was conducted to check the decibel level of each siren.
3. Investigation of new technology to be undertaken to ensure field umpires are alerted immediately the siren sounds.

International Rules Series

Essendon's Kevin Sheedy returned as coach of the Australian International Rules side, for the second year of his two-year appointment.

Long-serving West Coast assistant coach Robert Wiley travelled with the Australian team to Ireland in 2006 as part of the coaching panel, joining incumbents Jim Stynes, Danny Frawley, Stephen Silvagni and Rod Austin. Gerard Healy again served as chairman of selectors for the tour party.

Under the joint captaincy of Dustin Fletcher and Barry Hall, Australia rebounded from a narrow loss in the first Test at Pearse Stadium in Galway to decisively win the second Test at Croke Park in Dublin and retain the Cormac McAnallen Trophy.

A full report can be found on page 105.



WINNING TEAM: The 2006 Australian International Rules side retained the Cormac McAnallen Trophy after victory in the second Test at Croke Park.



AFL ABROAD: In 2006, Geelong faced Port Adelaide in front of a strong crowd at Brit Oval in London. The Cats proved too good for the Power, winning by 18 points.

Matches played overseas

Geelong and Port Adelaide contested the annual match at the Brit Oval in London, played on October 21, while the Kangaroos and Sydney played in Los Angeles as part of Australia Week festivities in January, 2006. Both matches were strongly supported.

AFL ground security review

In the lead-up to the 2007 season, the AFL was examining the security and safety procedures involved in all aspects of staging matches, following the venue audit conducted in 2003.

The review was to examine:

- Player and officials' travel arrangements to and from venues.
- Procedures for cheer squads and football club members.
- Umpire accommodation and travel arrangements.
- Policing arrangements and procedures.
- Private security arrangements and procedures.
- Provision of emergency services.
- Relevant legislation and by-laws for each venue.
- National and international best practice.

The working team is supervised by AFL Ground Operations Manager Jill Lindsay and Assistant to the CEO Tony Peek, supported by AFL Investigations Officers Allan Roberts and Bill Kneebone and AFL National Insurance and Risk Manager Clay MacKinnon.

Player draft rules – exchange of selections and father-son qualification

In 2006, the AFL Commission approved a change to the player exchange rules whereby clubs are now allowed to trade one or more selections for the selections of another club, without a player involved in all such trades.

The change was designed to assist the trading of players from one club to another club by providing more flexibility, particularly in multi-club trades.

Separately, the Commission adopted a change to the father-son rule. Under the change, there is no longer a 20-year qualifying period

for the West Australian and South Australian-based clubs based on the immediate two decades in WAFL and SANFL football respectively before these teams entered the AFL competition, so as to ensure eligibility rules matched the other AFL clubs.

All 100-game players in the AFL for any club continue to automatically qualify for father-son status, with this rule originally introduced to compensate for the period before the West Australian and South Australian-based clubs joined the competition, with no access to father-son selections.

AFL injury survey

The AFL Report on Injuries has now been delivered annually for 14 years – the longest report of its kind for any sport in the world to be released publicly.

The 2005 season was found to be the second lowest year on record for injuries, behind only the 2003 season, and again lower than the long-term average since the survey commenced.

Hamstring strains remained the most common and prevalent injury in the AFL, while the 2005 season revealed a downturn in ruck-related knee posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) injuries.

From 1997-2004, there was an increase in the number of PCL injuries occurring at centre-bounce ruck contests, while in 2005 no injuries of this type were caused by a centre-bounce contest.

The rules relating to centre bounces were changed at the start of 2005, following data from these injury surveys, and club medical officers strongly believe the annual injury survey and ongoing research projects has contributed to advances in injury prevention and/or management.

Total Player Payment rules

The Football Operations Department has direct responsibility for the enforcement of the competition's Total Player Payment rules – a key equalisation plank of the competition.

In 2006, two clubs faced action under these rules. St Kilda was sanctioned \$40,000 and Collingwood was sanctioned \$10,000 for the failure to lodge arrangements with players within the required timeframes.

AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2006

2006 AFL Total Player Earnings

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2005-2006
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	Variance %
Gross Player Payments	62,186,000	71,985,000	80,951,208	88,957,912	97,701,770	101,843,018	108,645,462	110,960,485	114,215,259	2.93%
Deductions										
Finals/relocation, living & other allowances	1,093,000	1,073,000	844,209	812,883	1,478,536	1,657,728	1,660,839	2,096,184	1,816,889	-13.32%
Retention and cost of living allowances	991,000	838,000	1,112,500	1,178,125	1,390,625	1,484,375	1,406,450	1,291,500	1,175,574	-8.98%
Veterans' allowance 50% deduction	N/A	1,721,000	2,549,017	2,595,883	2,542,428	2,553,503	4,870,772	5,326,653	5,014,770	-5.86%
Other deductions	-	-	646,799	703,427	837,984	237,500	1,098,720	338,705	941,007	177.82%
Total deductions	2,084,000	3,632,000	5,152,525	5,290,318	6,249,573	5,933,106	9,036,781	9,053,042	8,948,240	-1.16%
Player Payments Less Deductions	60,102,000	68,353,000	75,798,683	83,667,594	91,452,197	95,909,912	99,608,681	101,907,443	105,267,019	3.30%
Injury Allowance	8,176,000	5,688,000	3,500,608	4,266,984	3,850,200	3,531,000	4,314,200	4,332,000	4,836,000	11.63%
Gross Player Payments Less Injury Allowance	51,926,000	62,665,000	72,298,075	79,400,610	87,601,997	92,378,912	95,294,481	97,575,443	100,431,019	2.93%
TPP Limit	52,400,000	68,000,000	76,000,000	83,000,000	89,000,000	95,000,000	97,840,000	100,800,000	103,564,992	2.74%
Gross Player Payments less injury allowance	51,926,000	62,665,000	72,298,075	79,400,610	87,601,997	92,378,912	95,294,481	97,575,443	100,431,019	2.93%
Margin/(Excess)	474,000	5,335,000	3,701,925	3,599,390	1,398,003	2,621,088	2,545,519	3,224,557	3,133,973	-2.81%
Additional Services Agreements (ASAs)	N/A	N/A	3,413,383	4,186,233	5,311,316	5,176,700	5,840,950	6,071,450	6,579,394	8.37%
Average Gross Player Earnings (including ASAs)	\$101,957	\$117,398	Listed \$126,996 Played \$140,295	Listed \$149,749 Played \$165,062	Listed \$167,229 Played \$194,732	Listed \$176,019 Played \$201,924	Listed \$184,656 Played \$211,230	Listed \$187,251 Played \$213,952	Listed \$192,962 Played \$220,027	

1990-2006 Summary of AFL Player Earnings

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played	Played
\$0-\$60,000	442	448	409	373	337	307	260	178	152	121	87	71	51	51	35	47	34
\$60,001-\$100,000	88	100	125	126	147	162	173	217	191	143	132	102	116	102	111	119	99
\$100,001-\$200,000	8	17	19	33	45	91	126	159	209	249	237	219	194	184	188	183	198
\$200,001-\$300,000	-	-	1	1	1	9	12	17	26	52	80	92	100	102	107	101	109
\$300,001-\$400,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	5	7	22	34	36	47	57	47	57
\$400,001-\$500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	14	20	31	24	21	30
\$500,001-\$600,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	9	8	12	18	10
\$600,001-\$700,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	4	4	7	7
\$700,001-\$800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0
\$800,001+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	3	5
Total	538	565	554	533	530	569	573	576	583	576	568	539	529	530	542	547	549

NB: Details listed relate only to players who participated in at least one senior match during the season. Schedule above shows Total Player Earnings including ASAs.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GAME DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL MANAGER — DAVID MATTHEWS

Carlton chose Marc Murphy with its prized No. 1 pick in the 2005 NAB AFL Draft. It didn't take the son of former Fitzroy star John Murphy long to show his skills in his debut year, averaging more than 19 disposals in the navy blue before a season-ending injury in round 13.



PERFECTLY PLACED TO KEEP GROWING

With participation on the increase at all levels and especially in key new markets, the AFL is poised to ramp up even further its strategies to develop all levels of the game.

The next five years (2007-2011) will see the biggest investment in the development of Australian Football ever, with a record \$208 million to be allocated to all levels of the game.

The record investment in the future of the game, outlined in the *Next Generation: Securing the Future of Australian Football* strategy, builds on the enormous growth in participation levels over the past five years.

The investment in the Australian Football community has already paid dividends with record growth in participation in 2006.

This year a record 581,839 people across Australia participated in Australian Football – an increase of 7.8 per cent.

While the total participation figure was a record, so too was the rate of growth with the 7.8 per cent rise the biggest single-year advance in the past decade, and almost double the average annual growth of 4.3 per cent from 2000-2005.

It was a stunning result and one that puts Australian Football in a stronger position with funding set to grow by a further 60 per cent over the next five years to a total of \$208 million. Under the *Next Generation* strategy, total participation across the country is expected to rise to 700,000 by 2011.

Much of the growth in 2006 was recorded in NSW and Queensland where resources were put into supporting volunteers, schools and local community clubs to ensure the game was more accessible.

In NSW/ACT, the number of participants in Australian Football grew by a massive 37.3 per cent to a record high of 84,132 – more than double the number participating in Australian Football in 2001.

This dramatic increase was driven by the strong growth in primary school participation through the establishment of intra-school competitions under the AFL Sport Education model. It demonstrates the importance of giving school-age children the opportunity to try Australian Football at an early age. Undoubtedly the success of the Sydney Swans was a contributing factor.

The other major jump in participation in 2006 was in Queensland where the number of participants grew by 11.5 per cent to a total of 69,796. The aim, now, is to reach 100,000 participants in Queensland by 2011.

In traditional markets, Western Australia fared best with a growth rate of 5.6 per cent followed by South Australia (2.8 per cent), Victoria (2.4 per cent) and Tasmania (1.8 per cent).

It wasn't just in participation where results of the investment in game development were shown. The NAB AFL Draft also provided a strong picture of the future.

Eleven Queenslanders were selected in the 2006 NAB AFL Draft – including eight players in the first 32 selected – to almost double the previous best of six draft selections from the Sunshine State in 2005.

Nine players from Country Victoria and five from Western Australia were other notable outcomes from the first 32 selections.

The NAB AFL Rookie Draft saw a further seven Queenslanders enter the AFL system for the first time.

The draft also provided another boost to game development – and a further endorsement of the AFL's long-standing support for the Indigenous community. Indigenous players made up about 10 per cent of the AFL playing lists in 2006, but the 2006 NAB AFL Draft saw 15 players selected – or an incredible 19 per cent of all players picked.

The other pleasing aspect was that five of those Indigenous players were part of the AFL's Indigenous youth team that went to South Africa in early 2006.

In another highlight, 30 players, including nine of the top 10 selections, were from the AIS-AFL Academy, again demonstrating the importance of the Academy in identifying and preparing young talent for AFL careers.

Another major feature of the year was the inaugural national game development conference, held at Telstra Dome in November, where 300 development officers and officials from state bodies across the country came together to talk about the future of the game.

It marked the first time all the national game development staff were in one room at the one time, talking about the *Next Generation* plan. The two-day conference was a great success and provided significant opportunities for on-the-ground staff to share their experience about what was working in building the game.

There were many other highlights across the country in 2006. They included:

- A record 136,163 primary and secondary school students participating in Australian Football – a 62 per cent increase on 2001.
- Continued success of the multicultural 'Welcome to the AFL' program, which saw more than 16,000 people from migrant communities attend an AFL game for the first time.
- Closer collaboration with netball in game development activities and joint support for the code.
- The celebration of the 10th birthday of the AIS-AFL Academy. Since 1997, 300 AIS scholarships have been awarded and AIS-AFL Academy graduates now make up 19 per cent of AFL lists.
- The first Indigenous youth tour to South Africa, with 25 Indigenous teenagers playing three games in South Africa.
- The annual AFL Community Camps, which saw more than 70,400 students involved in school visits; more than 9500 children participate in NAB AFL Auskick clinics; players visit more than 2200 people in hospitals and aged care facilities, and more than 3000 people attend official functions, raising more than \$46,000 for junior and community football.

GENERATION NEXT: Hawthorn's Sam Mitchell meets youngsters at the club's 2006 AFL Community Camp in Tasmania.



- The introduction of new education resources for primary and secondary schools.
- The development of the Medibank Private 1Seven program, which saw the AFL join with Cricket Australia and Netball Australia to launch a national health and wellbeing program for Australian girls and boys.

Total participation

Growth in participation in Australian Football in 2006 was the highest for any year on record since the national participation census was introduced in 1990.

Participation in Australian Football is measured by those who take part in structured activities of no less than six weeks. Participation over the past year leapt 7.8 per cent to a record 581,839 people. This was the biggest single-year advance in the past decade and almost double the average annual growth of 4.3 per cent from 2000-2005.

The breakdown of participation in Australian Football in 2006 was:

- **279,540** club participants (at junior, youth and senior levels).
- **147,361** NAB AFL Auskick participants.
- **136,163** primary and secondary school participants.
- **3257** AFL Recreational Football participants.
- **5101** veterans participants.
- **10,417** female participants in women's or girls' competitions.

NAB AFL Auskick

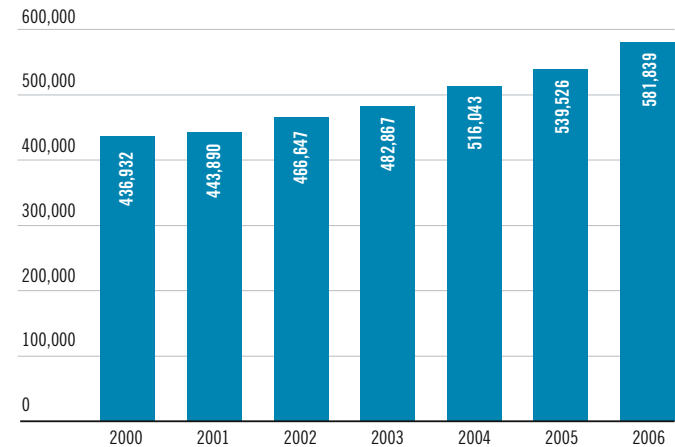
In 2006, NAB became the major sponsor of the AFL Auskick program. AFL Auskick is now the first phase of the NAB Rising Star program, which supports grassroots players and football communities and helps young Australians fulfil their dream of playing in the AFL.

The program continued to go from strength to strength, providing a record 147,361 young children with a fun way to learn with family and friends the basic skills of Australian Football.

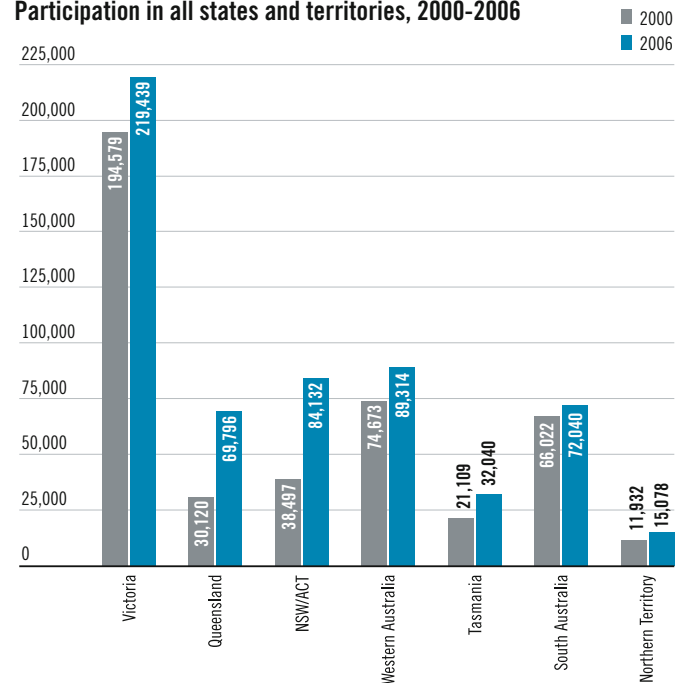
The program excels because of the dedicated support of the many volunteers who drive it and who are happy to pass on their love of the game to the next generation of young players.

In 2006, the number of Auskick centres increased to 2491 with

Participation in Australian Football, 2000-2006

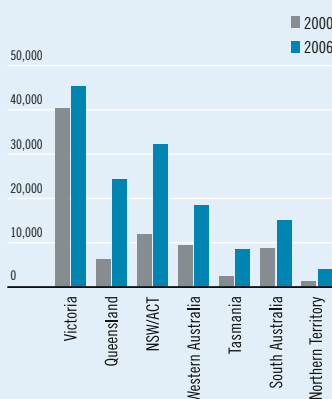


Participation in all states and territories, 2000-2006

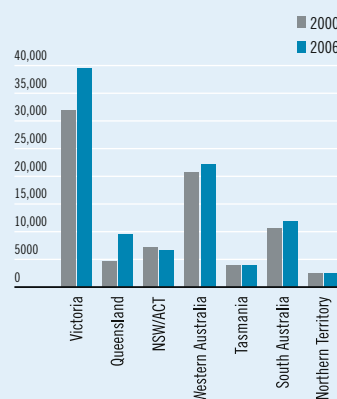


PARTICIPATION LEVELS 2000-2006

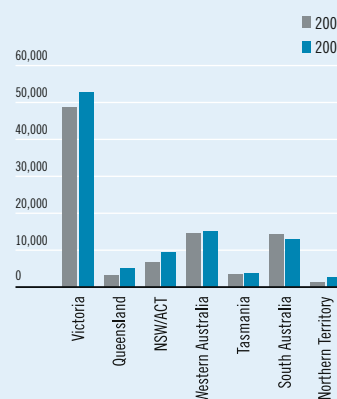
AFL Auskick



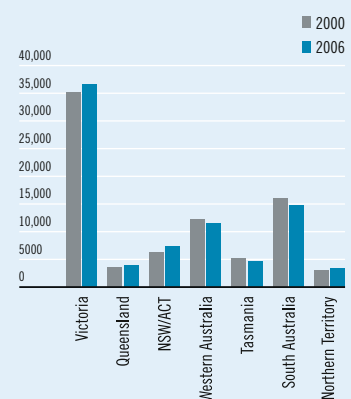
Junior club 8-12



Youth club 13-18



Open club





CONTINUING TO GROW: Former Hawk Angelo Lekkas, the 'Welcome to the AFL' ambassador, helps introduce the game to students from multicultural backgrounds; the number of females participating in Australian Football has increased significantly in recent years; AFLNT ambassador Michael Long meets Bishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, and more than 147,000 children were registered in the NAB AFL Auskick program.

centres stretching from the southern region of Tasmania right through to the far north. An average of 59 children attended each NAB AFL Auskick centre.

In 2006, the second NAB AFL Auskick Grand Final competition was held, with 94 children (one from each of the development regions across Australia) and seven junior umpires coming to Melbourne for activities, including joining NAB AFL Auskick ambassador Robert DiPierdomenico in the AFL Toyota Grand Final parade through Melbourne's streets and a visit to AFL World. The children played modified games on the MCG during half-time of the Grand Final. Twenty-two of the children were then selected to present premiership medals to the victorious West Coast Eagles players.

The development of new lesson plans for AFL Auskick rookies (aged 5-8) and pros (9-12) also began in 2006 and will be rolled out in 2007 to ensure the Auskick program continues to cater for the needs and ability levels of all children.

Other highlights included the annual NAB AFL Auskick celebrity match, held at Telstra Dome in round two and featuring the children of former AFL stars Stewart Loewe, Chris Bond, Dale Weightman and Chris Naish. Commonwealth Games gold medal-winning discus thrower Scott Martin also made his debut in the celebrity match.

School football

In 2006, there were 6767 school teams (4767 primary and 2000 secondary) participating in competitions longer than six weeks.

The introduction of Australian Football into the NSW primary school system boosted this figure.

This year, we had 91,671 primary and 44,492 secondary school students participating in school football competitions and learning the fundamentals of our game.

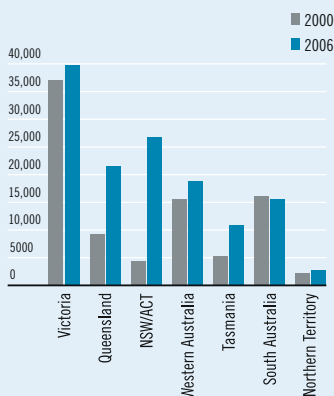
As well as participation in football itself, the AFL has also distributed a number of popular resources to assist teachers in schools by using football as a tool for learning. The resources feature football-themed lessons mapped to state-specific learning outcomes.

Female participation

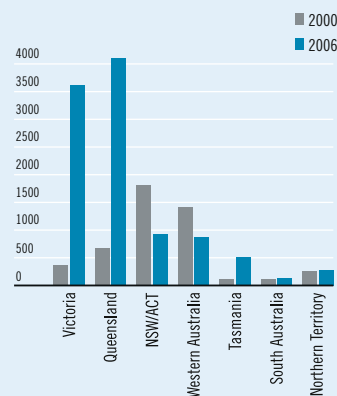
Australian Football continues to attract more female participants and in 2006 the total reached 46,412, with 24,143 girls participating in NAB AFL Auskick, 10,417 women and girls participating in dedicated female club and school competitions, and a further 13,492 participating in mixed school and club competitions.

The number of females playing in structured club and school competitions has risen by 168 per cent since 2001 with the strongest growth in Queensland (4083 players).

Primary and secondary school

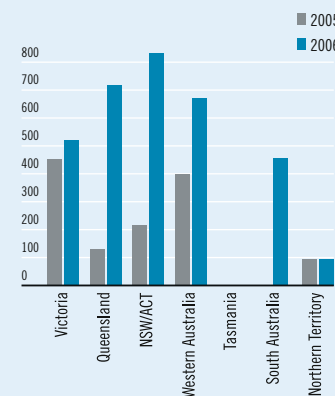


Women and girls

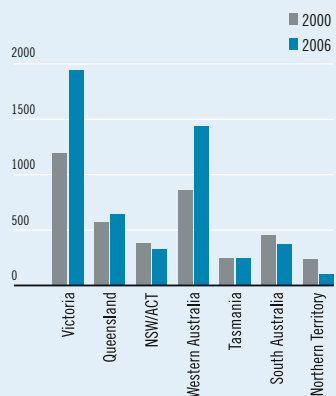


Recreational Football

AFL Recreational Football started in 2004.



Veterans



Victoria won the final of the 2006 AFL Women's National Championships held in Sydney, retaining an unbroken position as national champion over the 15 years the event has been staged. The carnival was the biggest ever held, with more than 270 players from seven states and territories (except Tasmania), as well as a development side from Victoria and a team from the Australian Defence Force, competing.

The All-Australians selected after the championships were eligible to play in the inaugural women's International Rules Series held in Ireland in October and November.

Community club football

While the number of people playing local football grew, it was also most encouraging to see the strategies implemented to help children make the transition from NAB AFL Auskick and primary school competitions to junior clubs were also working. In 2006, there was a 42 per cent increase (344 teams) in under-9 teams. The junior club segment is now the largest club segment, overtaking the youth club segment for the first time.

In 2006, there were 2618 football clubs fielding 11,673 competition teams (4285 junior, 4116 youth and 3272 open-age teams).

Senior club football was the only segment to record negative growth (down 0.49 per cent or 400 players). This drop reinforced our strategy to invest in AFL Recreational Football, which again showed an increase in participation.

AFL Recreational Football

AFL Recreational Football was developed to provide an opportunity for all Australian Football enthusiasts to enjoy participating in a modified game that has strong parallels with the traditional game.

Participation in AFL Recreational Football increased by 151 per cent in 2006 with 3257 active participants compared to 1297 the previous year, with further significant growth expected in the next few years.

NAB AFL Rising Stars program

The NAB AFL Rising Stars program identifies and recognises young players, providing a pathway for them to develop at junior club and state representation levels and as young AFL players. The program is active in all states and territories and continued to grow in stature throughout the Australian Football community.

In 2006, Port Adelaide's Danyle Pearce was recognised as the NAB AFL Rising Star and the coverage of the award and its stature in the industry continued to grow.

NAB AFL Draft

The 2006 NAB AFL Draft was conducted in Melbourne on Saturday, November 25. A key element in the NAB AFL Rising Stars program, the draft is now a major event in the AFL's post-season, generating more than 1100 print articles and more than 250 TV and radio mentions. There were more than 70 media representatives from around the country at the draft.

South Australia's Bryce Gibbs was the No. 1 selection by Carlton.

In other highlights:

- The top 10 players came from five different states.
- Nineteen per cent of players drafted were Indigenous.
- Eleven players were drafted from Queensland (another seven Queensland players were selected in the NAB AFL Rookie Draft).
- Eight of the first-round draftees were from country Victoria.
- Thirty players (including nine of the top 10 selections) were from the AIS-AFL Academy.
- Eighteen of the players selected were from Western Australia.
- Ten were from South Australia.
- Three were from New South Wales.

2006 NAB AFL Draft selections (first round)

1	Bryce Gibbs (Glenelg, SANFL)	Carlton
2	Scott Gumbleton (Peel Thunder, WAFL)	Essendon
3	Lachlan Hansen (Gippsland, VCFL U18)	Kangaroos
4	Matthew Leuenberger (East Perth, WAFL)	Brisbane
5	Travis Boak (Geelong, VCFL U18)	Port Adelaide
6	Mitch Thorp (Tasmania, Tas U18)	Hawthorn
7	Joel Selwood (Bendigo, VCFL U18)	Geelong
8	Ben Reid (Murray, VCFL U18)	Collingwood
9	David Armitage (Morningside, Qld)	St Kilda
10	Nathan J. Brown (North Ballarat, VCFL U18)	Collingwood
11	Andrejs Everitt (Dandenong, VMFL U18)	Western Bulldogs
12	James Frawley (North Ballarat, VCFL U18)	Melbourne
13	Jack Riewoldt (Tasmania, Tas U18)	Richmond
14	James Sellar (Glenelg, SANFL)	Adelaide
15	Daniel O'Keefe (Geelong, VCFL U18)	Sydney
16	Mitchell Brown (North Ballarat, VCFL U18)	West Coast

2006 NAB Drafts: where drafted players came from

Origin	National Draft	Rookie	Total
Victoria	32	27	59
South Australia	12	6	18
Western Australia	18	13	31
Queensland	11	10	21
NSW/ACT	1	4	5
Tasmania	4	-	4
Northern Territory	2	1	3
Ireland	-	1	1
Total	80	62	142

AIS-AFL Academy

The AIS-AFL Academy celebrated its 10th intake in 2006. Since 1997, 300 AIS scholarships have been awarded and AIS-AFL Academy graduates now make up 19 per cent of AFL lists.

The AIS-AFL Academy is part of a commitment made by the AFL and the Australian Sports Commission, through the Australian Institute of Sport, to support Australian football's best young players with their football and education development.

In November, the AFL marked the 10th anniversary of the program, with an AIS-AFL Academy Team of the Decade named to mark the occasion.

- B:** Andrew Walker (Carlton), Adam Hunter (West Coast Eagles), Joel Corey (Geelong)
- HB:** Brady Rawlings (Kangaroos), Brendon Goddard (St Kilda), Shaun Burgoyne (Port Adelaide)
- C:** Nick Dal Santo (St Kilda), Chris Judd (West Coast Eagles), Andrew Embley (West Coast Eagles)
- HF:** Alan Didak (Collingwood), Luke Hodge (Hawthorn), Brett Deledio (Richmond)
- F:** Adam Cooney (Western Bulldogs), Lance Franklin (Hawthorn), Daniel Wells (Kangaroos)
- R:** Josh Fraser (Collingwood), Luke Ball (St Kilda), Daniel Kerr (West Coast Eagles)
- I/C:** Ryan Griffen (Western Bulldogs), Brent Stanton (Essendon), Kane Cornes (Port Adelaide), Cameron Ling (Geelong), Mark McVeigh (Essendon), Justin Sherman (Brisbane Lions)

The 2006-2007 Academy squad features 26 players who took part in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships and two from the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships. The squad includes 11 Victorians, eight West Australians, three Queenslanders, four South Australians, one player from the NSW/ACT region, one Tasmanian and two players from the Northern Territory.

The quality of the program was further highlighted in November when 30 Academy graduates were drafted and Brownlow Medallist and three-time Brisbane Lions premiership captain Michael Voss was appointed an AIS-AFL Academy assistant coach alongside Leon Harris and Jason McCartney. Michael will attend the Academy's four training camps and will travel with the team to South Africa in 2007.

NAB AFL Under-18 Championships

The NAB AFL Under-18 Championships were held in Melbourne and Geelong from June 25 to July 2. Victoria Metro won its eighth Division One title while Queensland won Division Two for the second time. Both states were undefeated.

Tom Hawkins (Victoria Metro) won the Larke Medal as best player in Division One and Ricky Petterd (Queensland) won the Hunter Harrison Medal as best player in Division Two. Later in the year Hawkins was drafted under the father-son rule by Geelong and Petterd was selected by Melbourne.

NAB AFL Under-16 Championships

The NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were held in Brisbane and the Gold Coast from July 22-29. Victoria Metro won its fourth championship in nine years in Division One and the Northern Territory won Division Two, remaining undefeated.

Hamish Hartlett (South Australia) won the Kevin Sheehan Medal as best player in Division One and Marlon Motlop (Northern Territory) won the Alan McLean Medal as best player in Division Two.

2006 AFL Community Camps

The 2006 AFL Community Camps launched the AFL season with all 16 clubs visiting communities in each state and territory. Communities had the opportunity to see the AFL coaches and players in action on the training fields and at clinics, coaching forums and fundraising functions. New locations included Victor Harbor, Mackay, the Peel region, the Barossa Valley and Esperance. Camps also preceded some first-round matches of the NAB Cup.

AFL multicultural program

The 'Welcome to the AFL' program is a partnership between the AFL, the Victorian Government through the Department for Victorian Communities, Football Victoria and AFL clubs Western Bulldogs, Collingwood, Hawthorn, Richmond and Essendon to engage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The AFL's multicultural schools program was implemented in 42 schools in 2006 (28 primary and 12 secondary schools and two Adult Multicultural Education Services centres). A school workbook resource was developed to introduce the game, clubs and players to students complementing the six-lesson practical component of the initiative.

Program activities included inviting those new to Australia to an AFL match. In 2006, more than 16,000 people from newly arrived migrant and refugee communities attended an AFL match for the first time.

In 2006, a 'Welcome to the AFL' themed round featured the signing of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's Community Accord, a document that affirms community harmony and is recognised by the Victorian Government. Former Hawthorn player Angelo Lekkas was appointed the 'Welcome to the AFL' ambassador and a booklet that extended a welcome to a host of communities and outlined the essential elements of Australian Football in 17 languages was produced.

The program was extended to include multicultural development officers at Richmond and Essendon. The program's multicultural development officers are Kiemi Lai, Michael Nguyen, Graeme Pratt, Ali Fahour and Peter Romaniw with Nick Hatzoglou as coordinator.

Qantas AFL Kickstart

The Qantas AFL Kickstart program uses Australian Football as a vehicle to promote healthy lifestyles in Indigenous communities. The program works with state governments to tailor messages for different regions and communities.

More than 57,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in Australian Football programs which – as well as participation – provide leadership, education and life skills that will last a lifetime.

In August, 50 Indigenous boys aged 14 and 15 who were selected by state development officers from every state and territory took part in the Qantas AFL Kickstart camp in Melbourne.

The three-day camp was designed to offer Indigenous youth a unique football and educational experience. They attended an AFL match, watched Melbourne train, had AIS-AFL high performance testing, played in a curtain-raiser match at the MCG and met Indigenous leaders such as Michael Long and Catherine Freeman.

The AFL worked closely with AFLNT and Essendon Football Club to support new opportunities for the Tiwi Islands, including entry to the NTL for the first time. The partnership could be a model for other Indigenous communities.

Medibank Private 1Seven

In August, the AFL joined with Cricket Australia and Netball Australia to launch the Medibank Private 1Seven program, a national health and wellbeing program for Australian girls and boys. The program is designed to establish healthy behaviour that will lead to reduced rates of overweight and obese children.

The 1Seven ambassadors, dual Brownlow Medallist Robert Harvey, Australian netball co-captain Sharelle McMahon and Australian cricketers Mike Hussey and Karen Rolton, conducted school visits and contributed to the 1Seven website.

The basic message, 'Move More, Eat Well', is supported with an online health-related classroom curriculum and practical physical activities to develop key movement and motor skills. The program encourages at least one hour of moderate to vigorous participation exercise every day and seven serves of fruit and vegetables (two fruit and five vegetables). More than 380 schools throughout Australia have already registered.

International development

In February, 2006, 25 Indigenous teenagers took part in the first Indigenous youth tour of South Africa. The Boomerangs played three matches (one International Rules match and two Australian Football matches) against the South African Buffaloes in Potchefstroom, Mafikeng and Cape Town. The tour was supported by Tattersall's and the Clontarf Foundation and was about more than football – it was about developing leaders and exploring potential.

Players conducted clinics in regional communities, visited Soweto and learned of its history, witnessed the wildlife in Pilanesburg National Park, saw Nelson Mandela's cell on Robben Island and attended a service conducted by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. A tour documentary aired on the ABC *Message Stick* program in August.

There are 3000 Australian Football participants in South Africa's North-West province, but interest in the code is expected to grow in coming years. Projections include:

- Australian Football's expansion into four provinces: North-West (Potchefstroom, Mafikeng, Vryburg); Natal (Durban and Kwa Mashu), Western Cape (Cape Townships, Cape Flats, Stellenbosch) and Gauteng (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Soweto).
- By 2010, it is anticipated there will be more than 20,000 Australian Football participants in South Africa in regular structured programs.

- By 2010, there will be more than 70 senior clubs, each with under-16 and under-13 teams.
- An equivalent program to NAB AFL Auskick – SAKICK – will start, introducing juniors to the game in more than 200 centres.

In February, 2007, a South African youth team was in Australia to play against an Indigenous team in Darwin and Perth. The AFL supports an increasing number of AFL affiliates and is committed to developing market-specific plans in the lead-up to the 2008 Australian Football International Cup. Current international affiliates include: AFL Canada, Danish Australian Football League (DAFL), British Australian Rules Football League (BARFL), AFL Japan, Australian Rules Football League of Ireland (ARFLI), Nauru Australian Football Association (NAFA), AFL New Zealand, United States Australian Football League (USfooty), AFL South Africa, AFL PNG, Samoan Australian Rules Football Association (SARFA) and Australian Football League Germany (AFLG).

Coaching development

The AFL is strongly committed to coaching development and accreditation as part of an overall philosophy of improving the environment in which the game is conducted. In 2006, 5773 coaches (5489 Level 1, 263 Level 2, and 21 Level 3) attended courses.

AFL coaching ambassadors

AFL coaching ambassadors Stan Alves, David Parkin and Peter Schwab presented at most Level 2 coaching courses around Australia and participated in a number of other game development coaching activities, including playing key roles in the national coaching conference.

AFL national coaching conference

More than 400 participants from all levels of the game attended the AFL's fourth national coaching conference conducted at Melbourne's Telstra Dome from January 28-30. The conference, which focused on both on-field and people management aspects of coaching, was organised by the AFL's Game Development Department, in association with the Australian Football Coaches' Association (AFCA), to provide an opportunity for coaches to gain first-hand access to the most up-to-date coaching methods and practices.

Special courses

The AFL high performance coaching course (Level 3) was conducted at the AIS in Canberra from October 2-7 in association with the NAB AFL Draft Camp. Twenty-one invited coaches from around the country participated in presentations and challenging development activities. The candidates will complete the remaining course requirements and assessments in 2007. Many graduates from the most recent Level 3 course now have coaching roles at AFL clubs.

Sixteen participants attended a Level 2 accreditation course designed specifically for retired and experienced players conducted by the AFL, in partnership with the AFLPA, at Telstra Dome in January, 2006.



CONTINUING THE DEVELOPMENT: (from left) Tom Hawkins in action in Vic Metro during the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships; AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou, Australian Sports Commission CEO Mark Peters and AIS Director Professor Peter Fricker at the AIS-AFL Academy anniversary function; three young fans enjoy their introduction to Australian Football through the popular 'Welcome to the AFL' program, with 42 schools across Victoria taking part, and Bryce Gibbs, the No.1 pick in the 2006 NAB AFL Draft, with Carlton coach Denis Pagan.

Programs and resources

In a joint exercise between the coaching and umpiring development sections of the Game Development Department and the umpiring section of the Football Operations Department, the AFL developed a new approach to improving coach-umpire relationships under the theme of 'Good Coaches Make Better Umpires'.

The new information and philosophy was introduced to all coaching courses during 2006. In line with this philosophy, two umpires' coaches also participated in the high performance course.

The coaching sections of the *NAB AFL Auskick Manual* have been revised for 2007, including a complete update of lesson plans.

Umpire development

In 2006, umpires at community league level were recognised during round nine, when all officiating umpires in AFL matches wore a special green shirt, the same worn in community football competitions by new and inexperienced umpires as part of the AFL's umpire mentor program.

The green shirts were worn to raise the awareness and profile of this vital game development program, while also promoting the important role of umpires across all levels of the game. Conducted nationally with more than 500 experienced umpires trained as mentors, the program completed in its third year and supported the development of more than 1000 umpires in 2006 – a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. There was also an 8 per cent increase in trained umpire mentors, a 3.7 per cent increase in umpire numbers nationally and as a result of an intensive umpire coach development program, a 23 per cent increase in umpire coach accreditation.

In 2006, the AFL also conducted a forum to recognise 24 young female umpires, seeking their views on how to increase female participation in umpiring.

Recruitment and retention of umpires still remains a significant challenge, particularly in regional areas and where participation growth is high, which is why the AFL places so much importance on mentors, support programs and encouraging people to recognise the importance of umpires to the game.

Closer collaboration with netball

In 2006, the AFL and its clubs continued to establish closer ties with Netball Australia and its top-level clubs, building on the strong partnership between the two sports at community level.

Netball Australia will relocate to Melbourne. The AFL and Netball Australia formed a strategic partnership that will see the sports' governing bodies work together on key issues, including competition management, commercial operations, and game development.

Australian Sports Commission

The AFL continued to build on its already strong partnership with the Federal Government, especially government bodies such as the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). The ASC's commitment to our game was evidenced in this letter from ASC CEO Mark Peters: *The Australian Government is a strong supporter of Australian sport. The Australian Sports Commission is the government body that develops, manages and invests in sport at all levels in Australia.*

The ASC funds and works closely with a range of national sporting organisations, state and local governments, schools and community bodies to ensure sport is well run and accessible so that everyone can participate and enjoy the benefits. The ASC upholds the integrity of sport through many innovative programs to promote ethical sporting practices and sport free of performance-enhancing drugs.

During 2005-06, the Australian Government, through the ASC, supported the AFL with funding of \$466,000 for the development of the sport and its continued enhancement at the grassroots and elite levels, including through the AIS-AFL Academy program.

The ASC continues to provide annual financial support for the AFL's Kickstart program to provide opportunities for disadvantaged Indigenous children. In addition to the direct funding provided by the ASC, regionally-based Indigenous sport development officers, employed under the ASC's Indigenous Sport Program, continue to work in collaboration with the AFL to deliver the Kickstart program to identified Indigenous communities in remote areas. In 2006, seven communities were targeted: Wadeye, Maningrida, Borroloola, Ali Curung and Yuendumu in the NT and Wilcannia and Dareton/Wentworth in western NSW.

The AIS continues to play an important role in developing future AFL stars, with 19 per cent of all current AFL players graduating from the AIS-AFL Academy. The AIS continues to provide young AFL players with the opportunity to access world-leading sport science and sport medicine services and assists with the preparation of these players for the demands of the AFL.

The ASC looks forward to a continued winning partnership with the AFL in 2007 and beyond.

AFL NSW/ACT

The core focus of the AFL in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory is the development of participants, player talent and fans of Australian Football across a region which spans some 3200 schools and 1130 community club teams participating in 18 affiliated leagues.

Infrastructure required to continue the growth of the game includes coaches, umpires, administrators, facilities and data systems for clubs and schools.

A significant achievement in 2006 was the implementation of structured inter- and intra-primary schools competitions.

Inter-school competitions have grown from 36 teams to 342 teams in the past two years and an additional 9000 registered participants took part in intra-school programs.

Participation at a club level has grown by 38 per cent in the past two years, indicating that initiatives to improve the transition from school to community club football are delivering the desired outcomes.

The primary school program has been designed to attract students, parents and teachers to Australian Football.

During the past year, plans were concluded to significantly increase the presence of Australian Football in secondary schools across all public and private systems.

In 2006, 74 secondary school teams participated in inter-school competitions, compared to 29 in 2005.

The Combined Independent Schools' (CIS) spring competition increased to 30 teams in 2006 from 16 teams in 2005.

CIS representative teams played a curtain-raiser game at Telstra Stadium while the primary CIS participated in the 2006 state carnival.

In 2007, the Metropolitan Catholic Schools will field 20 secondary teams in a term three AFL program.

Other programs will be introduced for year 7-9 students and by 2010, the aim is to have a complete year 7-12 secondary school AFL program.

Providing first choice athletes in NSW and ACT with an opportunity to ultimately pursue an AFL career led to the introduction in 2006 of a program spanning the age groups of 13-18 in six regions, a scholarship program and the Sydney Swans AFL Academy.

Greater Sydney scholarship program

In 2006, the AFL established a scholarship program in Greater Sydney, which is designed to attract young athletes aged 15-17 and their families to experience Australian Football, and also develop a broader base of quality players and coaches. Each AFL club is able to sign a maximum of two players from NSW each year on scholarships (a maximum of six per club at any time). By the end of 2006 more than 20 teenagers from NSW had been signed on scholarships.

Facilities

Securing quality community facilities is fundamental to the development of the game.

Highlights of 2006 included:

- Work starting on the Blacktown Olympic Park project which in the first stage will cost \$21 million and provide facilities including two AFL-standard grounds in partnership with City of Blacktown, the NSW Government and Cricket NSW.
- Securing the \$4.5 million Rouse Hill development in partnership with the East Coast Eagles and Kellyville Junior Football Clubs, Cricket NSW and the Shire of Baulkham Hills.
- Other facility developments included the Sydney Showgrounds, Heffron Park, Maroubra, Bat and Ball, Moore Park, and North Dalton Park, Wollongong.



GROWING THE GAME: Sydney Swans players including Brett Kirk (left) and Jared Crouch at a clinic at North Sydney Oval; AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou and NSW Premier Morris Iemma start work at the Blacktown Olympic Park project, and Sydney Swans defender Lewis Roberts-Thomson signs the jumper of a young Swans supporter at a fans' day at Ern Holmes Oval.

AFL QUEENSLAND

A record NAB AFL Draft representation topped another successful period of expansion and development. Eleven Queenslanders were drafted – including eight in the first 32 selected – to almost double the previous best of six selections in 2005.

Even more pleasing and further proof of the quality of the AFL penetration statewide was the geographic breakdown of the draftees – three from Brisbane, four from the Gold Coast, two from Rockhampton and one each from Mackay and Toowoomba.

This came after a record 13 Queenslanders were invited to the NAB AFL Draft Camp and a further seven were invited to take part in state screening sessions after being nominated by AFL clubs as potential draftees.

And when a further seven Queenslanders were taken in the NAB AFL Rookie Draft – two each from the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane and one from Cairns – it meant that a staggering 18 Queenslanders had joined the AFL system in one year for the first time.

Thirty-four Queenslanders have joined the AFL in the past three years. In 2007, 52 Queenslanders will feature on the lists of 13 of the 16 AFL clubs.

Participation numbers continued to climb, with a 11.5 per cent increase in total participation.

Most importantly, there was no significant drop-off despite a tough season for the Brisbane Lions, the game's flagship in the Sunshine State and a major catalyst in the code's recent popularity boom.

Indeed, public awareness and AFL presence both grew in the key market of the Gold Coast, following the AFL's decision to play four pre-season and home and away matches at Carrara in 2006 and the commitment by the Kangaroos to play 10 home and away matches on the tourist strip in the next three years.

Game development

While the overall focus remains on the big picture, providing participation opportunities at all levels, from NAB AFL Auskick to primary and secondary schools and community football, the primary focus for AFL Queensland in the third phase of the development program in 2006 was at club level. This was done specifically to ensure sufficient quality opportunities for graduates from the enormously successful introductory NAB AFL Auskick program, where numbers have soared from 6119 in 2000 to 24,123 in 2006, and school football, where there has been a similarly big flow-on effect.

Significantly, there was a 7 per cent increase in participation in club football in 2006 as a direct result of specific strategies to improve facilities and administration, increase coaching numbers and spread the volunteer load.

Also, there was a 123 per cent participation increase in women's football after a series of female-only competitions were introduced in primary and secondary schools, coupled with an increase in existing modified programs for girls.

An all-female day at the Gabba in August, when the half-time junior activities during an AFL game featured only females, including umpires, was a wonderful promotion.

Queensland is now ranked second among the Australian states and territories in participation behind Victoria. And only just.

AFL Recreational Football has made big strides against the traditionally popular rugby game of 'touch football'. In 2006, there were 94 teams, up from 48 in 2005.

Overall participation in Australian Football in Queensland has grown from 27,675 in 2000 to 69,796 in 2006. The aim, now, is to reach 100,000 by 2011.

Water shortage

A major concern confronting Australian Football in Queensland is the worst drought in more than 100 years. Most areas of south-east Queensland were on strict water restrictions by October, impacting on all outdoor community sporting activities.

AFL Queensland, with support from the Queensland Government, Brisbane City Council and Horticultural Australia, led the way in combating this issue, first via an extensive research program and later a turf management program.

It couldn't stop the temporary closure of five suburban grounds for a short period under AFL Queensland's risk management and duty of care policy, but happily these extreme cases were quickly rectified to allow competition to resume.

With the support of the AFL via a \$200,000 grant for turf maintenance equipment, it is hoped that, notwithstanding dam levels falling to 25 per cent capacity, AFL Queensland will continue to be able to support grassroots clubs in this area.

Other highlights for AFL Queensland:

- AFL Community Camps were held for Essendon and Melbourne on the Gold Coast, and for the Brisbane Lions in Mackay.
- State umpiring academies were established in three schools in south-east Queensland to enhance the recruitment of umpires.
- Queensland successfully hosted the Australian Country Championships on the Gold Coast in July.
- The Queensland State Open representative team beat the ACT for the fourth year in succession, while the Queensland Under-21 team beat the Victorian Amateur Under-19 team. Queensland also won the Division Two title at the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships, remaining undefeated.
- In an improved AFL Queensland State League competition, Southport won its 12th premiership in 24 years since graduating from the Gold Coast competition in 1983.



COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

GENERAL MANAGER — GILLON McLACHLAN

(APPOINTED CHIEF BROADCASTING AND COMMERCIAL OFFICER DECEMBER, 2006)

Chris Judd, in his first season as West Coast Eagles captain, enjoyed a spectacular year, finishing with 595 disposals, including a season-high 39 against the Brisbane Lions in round five, before leading his club to its third premiership.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

The renegotiation of the new media deal with Telstra and ongoing strong support in the area of sponsorships, memberships and AFL consumer products, provided the basis for another excellent year of revenue growth.

Strong support from its long-term partners ensured the AFL again recorded revenue growth of more than 15 per cent in 2006. This revenue – and the securing of major long-term contracts – provided much of the basis for money to be distributed as part of the *Next Generation* strategy over the next five years.

We also expanded our key corporate partnerships, with Medibank Private and Skins joining the list of supporters of the game, while achieving strong gains in consumer products revenue and significant improvements in the customer experience and take-up of AFL events and hospitality.

Toyota kicks record sponsorship goal

One of the major achievements in 2006 was securing the extension of Toyota's sponsorship of football, one of the biggest sponsorship deals in Australian sport.

The agreement between the AFL and Toyota, Australia's leading car company, was signed off on the bonnet of a new Toyota Aurion driven into the middle of Telstra Dome before the round 15 match between Carlton and the Western Bulldogs. It continued Toyota Australia's relationship as the Premier Partner of the AFL, a position it has held since 2004.

The signing of the two-year deal (with a three-year option) cemented Toyota's relationship with the Australian heartland and its association with the AFL premiership season and AFL finals series. Toyota also backed community football through its support of a grassroots footy program, which resulted in \$250,000 invested into local football.

As the AFL's Premier Partner, Toyota Australia's other involvement includes the Toyota AFL Mark and Goal of the Year competitions.

Fans win in new media rights deal

In 2006, the AFL negotiated a five-year, \$60 million agreement with Telstra BigPond as the new media partner for the next five years.

The agreement will see Telstra BigPond continue to operate the *afl.com.au* website and AFL Telstra Network, as well as provide fans with the opportunity to get even closer to the game, through cutting-edge broadband and Next G mobile content.

The *afl.com.au* website is already the most popular sporting website in Australia, averaging more than 1.5 million unique users each month and, under the agreement with BigPond, there will be significant improvement in features and functionality over the next five years.

Other highlights of 2006 included:

- Three clubs – the Western Bulldogs, St Kilda and the Kangaroos – joining membership shared services, with three more clubs set to join for 2007.
- A record 519,126 club members – a 2.49 per cent increase on the previous record tally of 506,509 members.
- The addition of the NAB Cup and NAB AFL Auskick program to the hugely successful NAB AFL Rising Stars Program.
- The second-best year for attendances, with 7,062,307 spectators attending NAB Cup, Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Toyota AFL Finals Series.
- A 13.6 per cent increase in revenue from the consumer products division.
- The continued expansion of Toyota AFL Grand Final week to incorporate more events and more people participating.

Corporate Partners

One of the great strengths of the AFL is its association with leaders of Australian business and industry including:

- Toyota Motor Corporation Australia
- Foster's Australia
- Coca-Cola
- National Australia Bank
- Telstra BigPond
- Tattersall's
- Qantas
- InterContinental Hotels Group
- Reebok
- Medibank Private
- Origin Energy
- Sony Computer Entertainment
- Rebel Sport
- Kellogg's
- City of Melbourne
- Tabcorp
- Betfair
- Pedigree





KEY PARTNERSHIPS: AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou and Toyota Australia senior executive director David Buttner sign the new major partner agreement at Telstra Dome; Western Bulldog Rohan Smith in front of Carlton Draught signage at Subiaco Oval; guests at the 2006 Coca-Cola AFL All-Australian function, and Eagles captain Chris Judd battles Dockers skipper Peter Bell for possession in a round one NAB Cup match.

Toyota Motor Corporation Australia

Toyota concluded its third year as sponsor of the AFL premiership season, AFL finals series, AFL Grand Final, AFL Mark and Goal of the Year competitions, the Brownlow Medal function and key events in support of AFL Grand Final week.

Toyota's ongoing commitment to Australian Football is demonstrated by the confirmation this year of a two-year extension to its current partnership, with an additional three-year option. The Toyota partnership with the AFL will extend through to at least the end of the 2008 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Toyota's partner integration and active leverage of the relationship is embodied via:

- The extension of the Great Moments in Football advertising campaign with two new television commercials in 2006, featuring Alex Jesaulenko and Malcolm Blight.
- Ongoing development of the Good for Footy program, with all goals kicked by Toyota AFL ambassadors (James Hird, Matthew Lloyd, Nick Riewoldt and Jonathan Brown) raising more than \$250,000 for grassroots football clubs in country Victoria and southern New South Wales.
- Provision of vehicles to support major Grand Final week activity, including the Toyota AFL Grand Final parade and Toyota AFL Grand Final motorcade.
- A growing commitment to engage and interact with AFL fans via the Toyota AFL Grand Final week live site at Federation Square.

Foster's Australia

The partnership between the AFL and Foster's Australia is the longest standing in the AFL, with Foster's providing the official beer, wines and spirits of the AFL.

Foster's was a strong supporter of AFL Grand Final day, providing Irene Cara as a key international entertainment act to leverage the launch of the Carlton Draught "Flashbeer" campaign in late August. Foster's also sponsored a party during AFL Heritage Week and sponsored the Australian International Rules Series team that won the series in Ireland.

Once again, Crown Lager hosted the Brownlow Medal After-Party, which continued to grow as an event on football's night of the year.

Foster's association with the code was extended even further in 2006, with 15 of the 16 AFL clubs benefiting from Foster's continued support. Many of our state affiliates and regional leagues also enjoyed this support.

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola remains a strong supporter of football at all levels and continues to support a range of activities from grassroots through to the elite level. In 2006, Coca-Cola supported 15 of the 16 AFL clubs.

The major focus was the successful launch of Coke Zero into the Australian market, which resulted in record outcomes for the company. The coordinated leverage campaign via the AFL saw thousands of football fans exposed to Coke Zero and also given an opportunity to 'Live Life Like Footy' for a year.

Event highlights for 2006 included naming rights sponsorship for the 2006 Coca-Cola AFL All-Australian team and the Grand Final After-Match concert at Punt Road Oval, where 12,000 people watched Thirsty Merc and Mark Seymour perform, before welcoming the 2006 premiers, the West Coast Eagles, on stage.

National Australia Bank

It was a watershed year in 2006 for the National Australia Bank in terms of its AFL partnership, as it added the NAB Cup and NAB AFL Auskick program to the hugely successful NAB AFL Rising Stars Program.

Identifying and developing the next generation of AFL players is a fundamental plank of the AFL's mission, and this mission has been greatly supported by NAB. The growing NAB-AFL partnership now ensures NAB has direct influence over the development of footballers from their earliest NAB AFL Auskick days, through the NAB AFL Rising Stars Program, to when they make their AFL debuts via the NAB Cup, through the support of the NAB AFL Auskick program, NAB AFL Rising Star, NAB AFL Draft, NAB AFL Draft Camp, NAB AFL Under-18 Championships, AIS-AFL Academy and NAB AFL Under-16 Championships.



PlayStation 2



Kellogg's



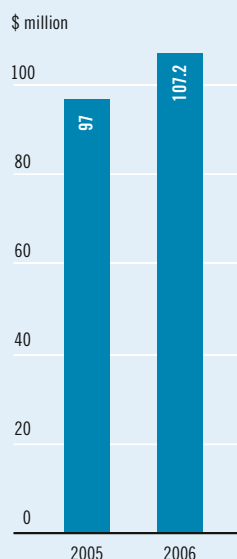
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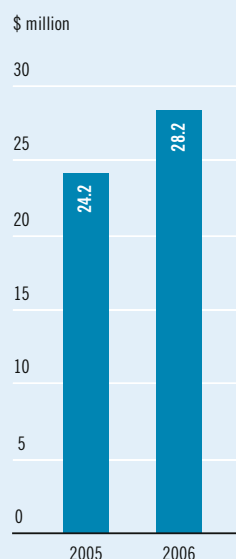
Commercial Operations revenues, 2005-2006

Gross revenues



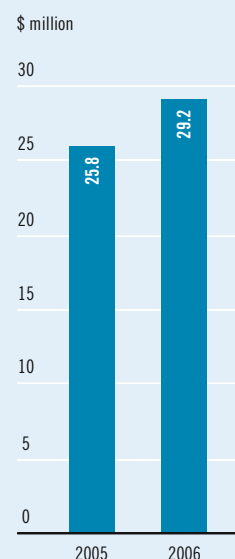
Total revenue increase of 12.6 per cent, from \$95 million to \$107 million.

Corporate partners



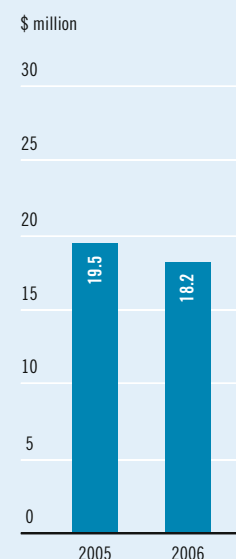
Included renewed agreements and introduction of Medibank Private, among others.

Ticketing (h & a, finals)



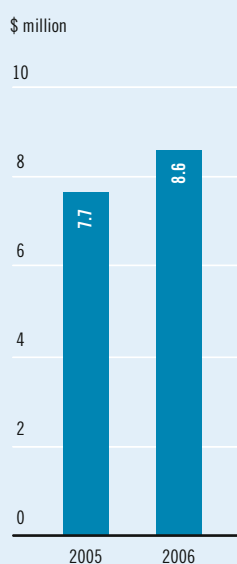
Finals crowds up 11 per cent on 2005.

AFL Memberships



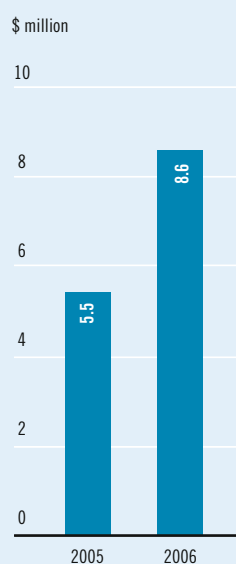
AFL Premiership Club transferred to events and hospitality.

Consumer products



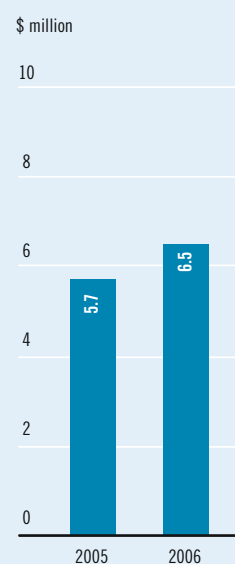
22 per cent growth in gifts, toys and games and 29 per cent growth in supporter apparel sales.

Corporate hospitality/events



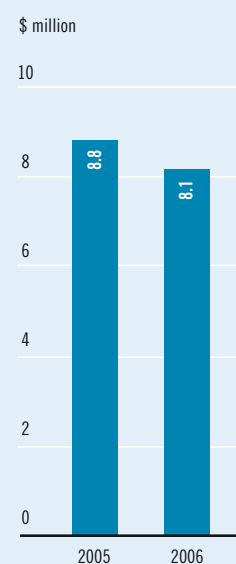
AFL September Club led growth.

Internet and statistics



AFL website attracted 1.5 million unique browsers per month, up 27 per cent per month.

Publications



Slight decline in sales of *AFL Record*.

NAB also partnered the AFL in the NAB AFL Auskick Grand Final competition, which brought 94 NAB AFL Auskick participants and their parents from across Australia to the 2006 Toyota AFL Grand Final in Melbourne, with 22 lucky participants selected to present the premiership medals to the winning team. Each participant represented the 96 different game development regions in Australia.

Tatts TipStar

Once again, Tatts TipStar was the official footy tipping competition of the AFL. The footy tipping competition is governed by Tattersall's and Footy Consortium Pty Ltd, with weekly and end-of-season tipping options available to participants. The end-of-season cash prize of \$150,000 attracted more than 21,807 registered players during 2006.

Qantas

Qantas is the official airline of the AFL and, in 2006, it also continued as principal partner of the AFL's Indigenous programs, including the Qantas AFL Indigenous All-Stars game held in Darwin, the Qantas AFLPA Marn Grook award for the best emerging Indigenous player (Danyale Pearce), and the Qantas AFL Kickstart program.

The Qantas AFL Kickstart program brought together 46 Indigenous footballers from around Australia to Melbourne in September to participate in a week-long training camp. The camp culminated in a curtain-raiser to the Richmond-Essendon game in round 22 at the MCG.

Tabcorp

The AFL welcomed Tabcorp as a new corporate partner for the 2006 season and looks forward to building a mutually beneficial relationship in future years.

Through an open and transparent partnership, the Tabcorp relationship allows the AFL to gain invaluable insight into the wagering industry for AFL matches, as well as special events such as the Brownlow Medal.

Coordinated marketing campaigns were launched nationally this year and we look forward to working with Tabcorp to foster this relationship for long-term industry benefit.

Sony Computer Entertainment

As a second-year partner of the AFL, Sony PlayStation 2 branding was on the uniforms of AFL umpires during all matches in 2006. The upgrade and relaunch of the new PlayStation 2 console game – AFL Premiership 2006 – was a further highlight of the season.

We are delighted to announce that Sony Computer Entertainment exercised its option, with its logo on the uniforms of the AFL umpires for 2007.

InterContinental Hotels Group

The InterContinental Hotels Group has been the official hotel of the AFL since 2003. As part of this relationship, the InterContinental Hotels Group provides accommodation for all AFL clubs, officials and staff at InterContinental Hotels, Holiday Inn Hotels and Crowne Plaza Hotels around Australia.

Recognition goes to InterContinental Hotels Group for its support for club accommodation requirements and its willingness to respond to the particular needs of our travelling teams.

Reebok

Reebok completed its final year as the official apparel and footwear supplier to the AFL. As part of this agreement, Reebok supplied apparel and footwear to:

- AFL umpires.
- NAB AFL Auskick support staff.
- Those working in the NAB AFL Rising Stars Program.

The AFL would like to take this opportunity to thank Reebok and the team managing the partnership for their support over the last two years. We also wish Reebok well with its ongoing involvement with Richmond, Port Adelaide, Fremantle and the Kangaroos.

Rebel Sport

Rebel Sport retained the exclusive branding relationship with all AFL club runners' uniforms in 2006.

Medibank Private

The AFL welcomed Medibank Private as a new partner in 2006 and looks forward to delivering an exciting program in coming years.

In 2006, the AFL, with the support of Cricket Australia, Netball Australia and Medibank Private, launched 1Seven, a national schools-focused initiative to tackle the community issue of childhood obesity. The Medibank Private 1Seven program encourages parents, children and educators to be more active and adopt healthy lifestyle choices in the formative years of childhood development.

Additionally, Medibank Private has a match-day presence at venues nationally via the branding of all medicarts, as well as dedicated information sites on afl.com.au regarding injuries and injury recovery.



BRAND EXPOSURE: AFL umpires carried Sony PlayStation 2 branding on their uniforms for the second straight season.

Kellogg's

Kellogg's has been the official breakfast cereal of the AFL since 2004 and continued to leverage this partnership by securing the naming rights to the increasingly popular Dream Team competition hosted on afl.com.au.

Last year, there was additional growth in this program with more than 220,000 registered participants vying for the \$20,000 first prize.

Origin Energy

Origin Energy maintained its support of the AFL and the clubs by honouring a commitment to provide a rebate to all participants in the highly successful Inside 50 program for 2006. The AFL and Origin Energy worked diligently to create AFL Green, a program launched in late 2006 which rewards both consumers and AFL clubs when their supporters make the switch to carbon-reducing energy sources via their home electricity bill. This program highlights the benefits that can be delivered through harnessing the reach and unmatched support of the AFL industry.

City of Melbourne

The City of Melbourne was again a key event delivery partner of the AFL during the AFL finals series and, particularly, AFL Grand Final week. We work very closely with the City of Melbourne to deliver our week-long live site activities at Federation Square each year, as well as the AFL Grand Final parade through the streets of Melbourne and the post-match Grand Final concert at Punt Road – all of which allow tens of thousands of football supporters to share in the unique Grand Final experience.

Betfair

Another new partner of the AFL in 2006, we look forward to working with Betfair as it builds its profile and business in this market.

Pedigree

The AFL was delighted to welcome Masterfoods and, specifically, its Pedigree brand as a support partner of NAB AFL Auskick. Pedigree activated its partnership via the production and distribution of collector cards, featuring AFL players and their pets, to all NAB AFL Auskick participants. We look forward to extending this partnership in future years.

AFL Publishing

AFL Publishing continued to produce all AFL publications, including the *AFL Record*, the *AFL Record Guide to Season 2006* and the AFL Annual Report, as well as manuals and publications for all AFL departments.

The *AFL Record* continued to be one of the most highly read sports magazines in Australia. Figures from the January to June Roy Morgan readership survey put weekly readership of the *AFL Record* in 2006 at 204,000, a small decline from the corresponding survey in 2005, which recorded 207,000.

Advertising sales continued to grow, with the 2006 figure achieving a record high. Overall growth since 2001 has been more than 230 per cent.

The 2006 *AFL Grand Final Record* was again the highest-selling edition of the year, with match-day sales in 2006 up 4 per cent on the 2005 figure.

The AFL and AFL Publishing entered into a joint venture



HIGHLY READ: The AFL's popular publications, including the *AFL Record*, the *AFL Record Guide to Season 2006* and *AFL JSquad*.

agreement to continue to publish *AFL JSquad Magazine* in 2006. This quarterly publication was launched in 2005 and targets the 'tween' market (seven to 13-year-olds). Under the new structure, the magazine continued to grow in advertising and copy sales in 2006.

Work has commenced on *The Complete Written History of Australian Football*, a project commissioned by the AFL. Contributing writers and historians have been engaged. AFL Publishing is coordinating the project.

AFL/Telstra Network

Once again, the partnership between the AFL and Telstra BigPond proved that the AFL/Telstra Network (AFLTN) was the leading online source for AFL news, analysis, match information and special features in 2006.

The AFLTN also provided in-depth coverage for all major AFL events such as the Australian Football Hall of Fame, Coca-Cola AFL All-Australian team, Brownlow Medal, NAB AFL Rising Star, trade week, NAB AFL Draft and Foster's International Rules Series.

The AFL website afl.com.au had further improvement in design and functionality in 2006, which assisted the fantastic growth the network enjoyed throughout the year. The network averaged about 1.5 million unique browsers per month, an increase of 27 per cent on 2005.

New features on the site included:

- An expanded rotating news and feature section on the homepage.
- A dedicated broadband content area, which included weekly, TV-style shows featuring coach, official and player interviews, as well as match replays.
- Improved information regarding match and venue details, and access to online ticket sales via Ticketmaster and Ticketek.
- Improved navigation, e-commerce sections and promotional areas for the network's major online competitions.
- Revamped areas for AFL membership and the Toyota Engine Room.
- The introduction of the 1Seven mini-site, along with further developments in the game development section.

The involvement of premier partner Toyota with the AFLTN was further enhanced with the revamped Toyota Engine Room mini-site.

It featured the Toyota Legendary Moments TV commercials and behind-the-scenes video out-takes featuring Malcolm Blight and Alex Jesaulenko, sponsorship of the Toyota game-day live scores and stats, and the Toyota Mark and Goal of the Year awards, with improved functionality to allow fans to vote for every weekly nomination.

NAB also increased its visibility on *afl.com.au* with sponsorship of the NAB AFL Tipping competition and provision of prizes, including the major prize of \$30,000. The competition generated more than 130,000 registered tipsters – up 45,000 on 2005. NAB also sponsored the NAB AFL Ladder Predictor, another popular feature on the network.

The Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Dream Team achieved a record level of participants, with more than 220,000 fans taking part. This was Australia's largest online fantasy-based sports competition in 2006.

The *afl.com.au* network has been the undisputed No.1 sports website in the country over the past five years and was instrumental in the renegotiation of a new agreement with Telstra this year.

Under the new agreement, the AFL and Telstra will work together for the next five years to manage and operate the AFL and club websites, as well as AFL mobile platforms and products, including exclusive match video, audio, news updates and statistics.

AFL Membership

AFL Membership continued to grow in 2006. The breakdown for AFL membership in 2006 was 45,455 AFL members, with 29,018 taking full membership, 14,276 taking silver membership and 2161 absentee members. AFL members taking Club Support memberships represented 8.3 per cent of the total club membership nationally.

More emphasis was placed on communication with AFL members, with a dedicated website linked from the *afl.com.au* homepage. As a result, visitation jumped by 35 per cent in 2006, with an expanded dedicated staff providing premium service to more than 38,000 inbound calls.

Archtics, Ticketmaster's membership technology, was also successfully implemented in 2006, providing a single source for all membership management, as was Account Manager, a powerful online gateway for members to manage their accounts and memberships online, and make payments via *afl.com.au*.

Since implementation, the AFL has sent more than one million emails and has consequently grown its email database by more than 6000 email addresses.

The improved communication also resulted in an improved renewal rate, with 95 per cent of AFL members re-signing – up from 93 per cent the previous year.

AFL Club Support Membership, 2006

Club	AFL Club Support Adults	AFL Club Support Conc	AFL Club Support Juniors	Total AFL Club Supports	% of Total
Adelaide	353	38	48	439	1.14
Brisbane Lions	522	73	59	654	1.69
Carlton	3,970	649	700	5,319	13.76
Collingwood	6,748	881	1,353	8,982	23.23
Essendon	4,742	727	855	6,324	16.35
Fremantle	28	3	7	38	0.10
Geelong	2,205	362	306	2,873	7.43
Hawthorn	1,721	259	224	2,204	5.70
Kangaroos	1,307	177	208	1,692	4.38
Melbourne	1,339	219	174	1,732	4.48
Port Adelaide	128	8	14	150	0.39
Richmond	2,836	330	629	3,795	9.81
St Kilda	1,850	252	357	2,459	6.36
Sydney Swans	498	109	70	677	1.75
West Coast Eagles	154	14	14	182	0.47
Western Bulldogs	885	133	130	1,148	2.97
Totals	29,286	4,234	5,148	38,668	100.00

AFL Club Membership, 2006

Club	Adults	Concessions	Juniors	Total Members at 30/06/06	% Variance
Adelaide	40,374	3,593	6,171	50,138	15.91%
West Coast Eagles	33,251	5,716	5,171	44,138	4.08%
Collingwood	26,848	3,424	7,766	38,038	-1.49%
Fremantle	25,029	3,320	7,317	35,666	4.35%
Port Adelaide	28,542	2,262	4,844	35,648	-3.22%
Essendon	23,842	3,771	4,898	32,511	-0.68%
St Kilda	22,195	3,378	6,754	32,327	0.89%
Geelong	20,801	4,468	7,021	32,290	4.77%
Sydney Swans	21,254	3,722	5,406	30,382	21.75%
Richmond	18,301	2,904	8,201	29,406	4.91%
Carlton	19,467	2,785	6,504	28,756	-14.25%
Hawthorn	18,725	2,486	6,792	28,003	-4.30%
Brisbane Lions	20,732	2,654	3,073	26,459	-8.49%
Western Bulldogs	16,926	3,141	5,975	26,042	18.51%
Melbourne	16,490	2,161	6,047	24,698	-0.43%
Kangaroos	15,437	2,137	7,050	24,624	1.95%
Totals	368,214	51,922	98,990	519,126	2.49%

Membership shared services

The Western Bulldogs completed their third year of the membership shared services and ended the year with record membership numbers. The Kangaroos and St Kilda committed to the AFL's membership shared services for 2007, and the service will grow further with at least three other clubs set to join the network early in 2007.

By season's end, the membership shared services department had moved into new premises at Telstra Dome, allowing it to perform the administrative functions of membership and service club members more efficiently than ever before.

Club Membership

It was also a record year for club membership in 2006, with the total number of members hitting 519,126 – a 2.49 per cent increase on the previous record tally of 506,509 members in 2005.

To put it in perspective, at least one in every 39 Australians is a member of an AFL club – an extraordinary result.

Nine clubs posted increases on their 2005 figures – Adelaide, Fremantle, Geelong, Kangaroos, Richmond, St Kilda, Sydney, West Coast and the Western Bulldogs – with the Crows' 50,138 signaling the first time a club had reached 50,000 members in the game's history.

On the back of its first premiership in 72 years, Sydney posted a 21.7 per cent increase to 30,382 members, while the Western Bulldogs lifted their tally by more than 18 per cent to more than 26,000 members. Memberships for Victorian-based clubs were up slightly (0.2 per cent), while there was an increase of 5.6 per cent for non-Victorian clubs.

Nine of the 16 clubs (Adelaide, Collingwood, Essendon, Fremantle, Geelong, Port Adelaide, St Kilda, Sydney and West Coast) all had memberships of more than 30,000.

Attendances

The total attendances for AFL games again passed the seven million mark in 2006, with 7,062,307 people enjoying NAB Cup, Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Toyota AFL Finals Series.

With the MCG out of action for the first four rounds because of its central role in the Commonwealth Games, football didn't return to the redeveloped ground until Anzac Day, when 91,234 supporters watched Essendon and Collingwood battle out the first AFL game at the revamped ground.

Overall, 6,204,056 spectators attended the 176 home and away matches played in every state and territory. The total attendance was the second highest on record, just falling below the 2005 record of 6,283,788.

In the finals series, 532,178 fans watched the nine finals played in four states (Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales) – almost 11 per cent more than in 2005 and the best finals series attendances since 2000. An outstanding crowd of 97,431 watched West Coast defeat Sydney in the Grand Final.

The 2006 season also saw the re-introduction of premiership season games at Gold Coast Stadium, Carrara, with an average crowd of 10,287 watching two games. Fourteen premiership season games were played in south-east Queensland in 2006.

Attendances by venue, 2005-2006

Venue	2006 games	Attendance	Average	2005 games	Attendance	Average
Telstra Dome	50	1,737,125	34,743	49	1,817,910	37,100
AAMI Stadium	22	766,831	34,856	22	827,768	37,626
Gabba	12	340,470	28,373	12	397,193	33,099
Manuka Oval	3	34,024	11,341	3	36,538	12,179
Marrara Oval	1	14,100	14,100	1	13,037	13,037
MCG	39	1,768,641	45,350	42	1,714,157	40,813
Carrara	2	20,573	10,287	1	30,052	30,052
SCG	9	273,617	30,402	9	258,599	28,733
Skilled Stadium	8	177,700	22,213	8	175,474	21,934
Subiaco	22	850,438	38,656	22	830,406	37,746
Aurora Stadium	5	85,539	17,108	4	63,087	15,772
Telstra Stadium	3	134,998	44,999	3	119,567	39,856
Total	176	6,204,056	35,250	176	6,283,788	35,703

Home game attendances by club, 2005-2006

Club	2006 attendance	Average	2005 attendance	Average	Variance
Adelaide	467,002	42,455	465,751	42,341	0.27%
Brisbane Lions	314,929	28,630	365,934	33,267	-13.94%
Carlton	370,495	33,681	406,732	36,976	-8.91%
Collingwood	581,718	52,883	459,352	41,759	26.64%
Essendon	465,665	42,333	508,182	46,198	-8.37%
Fremantle	402,255	36,569	387,466	35,224	3.82%
Geelong	301,703	27,428	305,608	27,783	-1.28%
Hawthorn	308,204	28,019	335,951	30,541	-8.26%
Kangaroos	262,355	23,850	338,748	30,795	-22.55%
Melbourne	379,720	34,520	438,556	39,869	-13.42%
Port Adelaide	299,829	27,257	362,017	32,911	-17.18%
Richmond	469,712	42,701	393,802	35,800	19.28%
St Kilda	389,637	35,422	405,415	36,856	-3.89%
Sydney Swans	376,859	34,260	355,808	32,346	5.92%
West Coast Eagles	448,183	40,744	442,940	40,267	1.18%
Western Bulldogs	365,790	33,254	311,526	28,321	17.42%
Total	6,204,056	35,250	6,283,788	35,703	-1.27%

WINNING GRAB: Geelong's Brad Ottens climbs high over teammate Tim Callan and Sydney's Darren Jolly to take the Toyota AFL Mark of the Year.



COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

Collingwood recorded the biggest jump in home game attendances with an average of 52,883 spectators at each home game – a staggering increase of 26.5 per cent. Richmond's home game average attendance increased by 19.2 per cent, while Sydney's attendances were up 5.9 per cent from 2005, and up by 13.5 per cent for its three Telstra Stadium games.

Attendance Summary, 2005-2006

	2005	2006	Variance	% Variance
NAB Regional Challenge	117,552	91,055	-26,497	-22.5%
NAB Cup	307,181	235,018	-72,163	-23.5%
Toyota AFL Premiership Season	6,283,788	6,204,056	-79,732	-1.3%
Toyota AFL Finals Series	480,064	532,178	52,114	10.9%
Total Attendances	7,188,585	7,062,307	-126,278	-1.8%

Ticketing

Nationally, the AFL sells more than 6.2 million tickets per annum across 12 key venues, with multiple ticketing and membership programs. About 55 per cent of all ticket volume is delivered through the two major Victorian venues – the MCG and Telstra Dome.

The AFL's strategic objective is to make games affordable to the community with a fast, efficient and easy process for obtaining tickets.

In 2006, general admission prices increased minimally from \$17.50 to \$18.50 for adults and from \$10.50 to \$11 for concession holders, with juniors remaining at the 2004 price of \$2.20 (all including GST).

Significantly, the AFL, in conjunction with Ticketmaster and the venues, introduced a new equalised schedule of fees and charges for the MCG, Telstra Dome, Subiaco Oval and Skilled Stadium, which now have fees consistent with all venues. This has reduced the cost of attending AFL games, especially the biggest matches where most patrons pre-book tickets.

BUMPER CROWD: More than 100,000 fans witnessed the 2006 AFL Grand Final parade through the streets of Melbourne.



This initiative resulted in a decrease in fees paid by patrons of 46 per cent for pre-purchased general admission tickets. A booking for a family of four made online resulted in an \$11 saving in comparison to 2005 prices.

In addition, a number of other ticketing fees levied on patrons and clubs were reduced or scrapped, with junior fees at low levels and families in particular incurring significant savings. Specific fees were abolished, with clubs making savings on a variety of other fees.

Under the *Next Generation* strategy, announced in September, the AFL agreed to freeze general admission prices for 2007, ensuring the game remains affordable and accessible.

Consumer products

The sale of Grand Final memorabilia in the wake of West Coast's victory capped a record year of growth in the AFL consumer products division, contributing to a 11.8 per cent increase in revenue.

More than 20,000 copies of the Grand Final DVD were sold in the two weeks following the match, making it the No.1 sports DVD in Australia, while 35,000 premiership T-shirts, 15,000 premiership polo shirts and 20,000 premiership caps were sold in the week after the game.

About \$1 million worth of memorabilia was sold in three weeks, helping to boost gross revenues in the AFL consumer products division to \$8.4 million for 2006. There was strong revenue growth across the board, highlighted by 22 per cent growth in gifts, toys and games, and 29 per cent growth in supporter apparel.

A number of new initiatives were undertaken in 2006 to increase the return to the 16 clubs and players from merchandising agreements. These included a license agreement for retail operations at the MCG to capture revenues for AFL and tenant clubs, and the negotiation of a new supplier agreement with Burley Sekem, resulting in a 15 per cent increase in margin return to participating clubs. In 2006, the AFL also restructured the gifts and homewares categories, resulting in fewer licensees but a greater range of consumer products.

The number of AFL Stores was also boosted with stores opening in Elizabeth and Colonnades in South Australia, while stores in Victoria's Highpoint, Knox and Southland Shopping Centres, Carousel in Western Australia and King William Street in South Australia had significant refits and upgrades.

The popular Mascot Manor range was also boosted by the 28-week, full-page, Mascot Manor promotional campaign, which ran in the *Sunday Herald Sun* in Victoria.

Events and hospitality

Support for the AFL's events and hospitality took a quantum leap in 2006 with more people attending more events than ever before. Revenue in this area jumped from \$5,510,000 in 2005 to \$8,672,000 in 2006 – a 57.4 per cent increase.

The events and hospitality department is divided into four categories – match-day, major event, Premiership Club and Grand Final week – and significant improvements were made in all four areas in 2006, resulting in strong growth in attendance numbers and revenues at events during the NAB Cup and home and away and finals matches.

A revamp of the match-day functions provided a greater football

and entertainment experience for partners and their guests. We entertained 2200 guests at eight official functions during the NAB Cup and 4300 guests at official functions during the premiership season.

Major events such as the Toyota AFL Premiership Season launch, the Australian Football Hall of Fame and the Brownlow Medal functions again demonstrated their importance on the Australian social and sporting calendar, recording strong corporate support and enormous media coverage.

In 2006, an additional function was held at the Brownlow Medal, with a further 250 guests in the River Room at Melbourne's Crown able to share in the excitement of Adam Goodes' victory.

In September, 29 corporate events, attended by 12,000 guests, were staged in four different states – an incredible logistical exercise.

The format of the NAB AFL Rising Star Medal presentation received plaudits for the way it showcased the talents and personalities of our young players, particularly the winner, Port Adelaide's Danyale Pearce, while the Coca-Cola AFL All-Australian team presentation was broadcast to a national audience through the Fox Footy Channel.

The Brownlow Medal presentation was just one highlight of an ever-expanding list of activities during Grand Final week. Allowing more supporters the chance to share in the excitement of Grand Final week saw the week continue to grow as a cultural and social event on the Australian calendar.

Boosted by increased support and opportunities for our corporate partners, the AFL Live site at Federation Square recorded a 9 per cent boost in attendances over the week. Some 161,700 supporters enjoyed activities, including a Brownlow Medal fashion preview, live interviews, a NAB AFL Auskick clinic and a host of other events, such as an *Australian Idol* concert thanks to Network Ten, and The Band on Demand concert hosted in conjunction with BigPond. More than 100,000 people turned out in Melbourne's streets to watch the Grand Final parade.

The 'Seriously' party also rose to new heights in 2006 with the glamorous star-studded event held on the 84th floor of the Eureka Tower during Grand Final week. The AFL and Network Ten co-hosted this event for players, media personalities, AFL associates and corporate partners.

The AFL Golf Classic was again well attended, with 35 corporate groups participating in the event at Yarra Yarra Golf Club during Grand Final week. Participants enjoyed an exclusive cocktail party before attending the Grand Final edition of Channel Nine's *The Footy Show*.

The popularity of the September Club, the AFL's village for corporate partners built just outside the AFL Members' Reserve at the MCG, continued to grow with a 20 per cent increase in the number of our valued partners attending Grand Final day. Guests enjoyed hospitality before the game, tickets to the Grand Final, and an after-party following the match.

More supporters were able to share the excitement of Grand Final day. About 4000 fans watched the game at Punt Road Oval, while 12,000 enjoyed the Coca-Cola concert featuring Thirsty Merc and Mark Seymour, before welcoming the victorious West Coast Eagles.

After receiving a facelift in 2005, the exclusive AFL Premiership Club met its membership capacity this year with 300 members – an enormous growth from a base of 120 in 2004. Members enjoyed access to an improved product, offering greater benefits and facilities.



MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

GENERAL MANAGER – COLIN McLEOD

Adelaide's Andrew McLeod continued to make an impact on and off the field in 2006,
with his brilliant football and by being active in the broader community.

THE TIES THAT BIND

The AFL's Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs Department is responsible for delivering the AFL's key messages.

The AFL's Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs Department is responsible for the management and delivery of the AFL's branding, advertising, promotions, media relations, issues management, public relations and community relations activities, while also providing assistance to all AFL departments for major projects, announcements and promotions.

To deliver on these tasks, the Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs Department works closely with all AFL departments, the 16 AFL clubs, the AFL's corporate partners, broadcast and media partners, the media generally, all levels of government and other associated stakeholders.

The department also works closely with the AFL Foundation, AFL World and others to provide a coordinated and consistent marketing and communications approach and to initiate ideas to promote Australian Football's impact in the community and the community's impact on Australian Football.

How fans rate the AFL

The AFL conducted extensive market research across the year to determine attitudes towards the AFL and the code generally. Despite the distractions in 2006 with the Commonwealth Games in March and the FIFA World Cup in June-July, the AFL continued to attract strong support across the country.

The research found:

- Nationally, 59 per cent of people "have an interest" in AFL. Of these, 86 per cent said they "regularly follow" AFL and 35 per cent said AFL was the sport they were "most interested" in (most interested was up from 31 per cent in 2003).
- In Sydney, the percentage of people who were "most interested" in AFL has increased from 13 per cent to 16 per cent since 2003, showing the benefits of the Sydney Swans' success and increased investment in the state.
- Nationally, 67 per cent of people watch AFL on television.
- Without prompting, the things people "like most" about the AFL were:
 - Excitement/entertainment (24 per cent).
 - Skill/talent/athleticism (23 per cent).
 - Speed of the game (20 per cent).
- This is supported by the attributes most strongly associated with the experience of watching an AFL game (live or on TV), stated as:
 - Entertaining (59 per cent of respondents).
 - For families (48 per cent).
 - Social (36 per cent).
 - Spectacle (34 per cent).
 - Fun (31 per cent).
 - Unpredictable (28 per cent).

- The study also showed that people regard the AFL as an organisation that is heavily involved in the community. Forty-six per cent of people nationally said the AFL was "community oriented" (versus the closest of the other football codes at 35 per cent). A further 54 per cent also agreed that the AFL is an inclusive sport that connects supporters and families into the larger football community.
- Of those interviewed, 38 per cent had attended at least one game with the average number of games at 5.1 games.

Key marketing programs

There were a number of marketing and promotional programs this year to boost interest in the game and assist our 16 clubs in promoting attendances and memberships and in building general awareness and support for the AFL.

The number of AFL memberships and club memberships were both up and attendances in 2006 were the second highest on record, despite the MCG being out of action for the first four rounds of the season.

One of the drivers for media and marketing activity was the series of themed rounds that provided a strong focus for the promotions of the game. Combining marketing activities, public relations, community relations and a strong promotional flavour, the themed rounds have provided a popular showcasing of the AFL's brand.

Increasingly the AFL is working with our 16 clubs to leverage themed rounds and ensure activities are coordinated and the messages support the central theme of the round. No better example of this is the Dreamtime at the 'G game, which has developed from a one-off game in 2005 to the centrepiece of a full round of activities promoting the Indigenous contribution to our game in 2007.

Aside from the season launch, boosted by AFL involvement in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games and significant national media focus on the captains' press call, there were a number of other themed rounds, including:

Rivalry round (round six)

Promoting the strong rivalries between clubs, this round saw a 19 per cent jump in attendances on the same round in 2005.

Rivalry round, which highlights many of the traditional and some of the newer rivalries in the AFL, continues to enjoy strong support among fans and also the media.

Welcome to the AFL (round 12)

Held over the split round, 'Welcome to the AFL' was aimed at introducing Australian Football to people not familiar with the game, and to celebrate Australian Football's multicultural past and present.

Former Hawthorn player Angelo Lekkas was named as 'Welcome



EXCITING TIMES: Fans continued to express their interest in the code, responding positively to market surveys and by turning out in significant numbers, while the AFL finals and themed rounds were a major success throughout 2006. Michael O'Loughlin kicks the winning goal against the West Coast Eagles in the qualifying final at Subiaco; Dean Polo turns in a match-winning performance against the Bombers in the Dreamtime at the 'G game, and Fremantle and Melbourne drew attention for their striking strips worn in the Heritage round.

to the AFL' ambassador and a booklet with Australian Football's essential elements translated into 17 different languages was included in the round 12 edition of the *AFL Record*.

AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou also signed the Victorian Multicultural Commission's Community Accord.

More than 20 multicultural groups were given the opportunity to attend their first AFL match during the round – and more than 16,000 people were introduced to the AFL as part of the AFL's multicultural program during the season, including more than 2000 people at Telstra Stadium in Sydney for the Sydney Swans-Collingwood clash.

Women's round (round seven)

The Women's round celebrating the contribution of women to football revolved around a number of forums in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, as well as support for club initiatives including Melbourne Football Club's breast cancer initiative and the appearance of goal umpire Chelsea Roffey in a pink uniform.

Also as part of the round, the AFL's consumer products department released a women's guernsey that received solid media attention and resulted in a strong boost in sales.

Heritage round (round 16)

This year's Heritage round took on a 'Back to the 1980s' theme complete with mullets, music, memories and a very strong media focus on the week.

A band featuring 1980s music icon Brian Mannix, current players including Aaron Davey and Russell Robertson and umpire Stuart Wenn, launched the week, which also featured a Carlton Draught 'Retro Rules' party hosted by Foster's and the launch on the retail market of CD/DVD and replica 1980s-style club guernseys. The week's activities received widespread media attention across the print, radio and TV outlets.

Attendances for Heritage round were up eight per cent on the same round in 2005 and up 19 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

AFL Finals Series

The West Coast-Sydney Grand Final capped off a great finals series – one that resulted in a total of 532,178 spectators – an increase of 10.9 per cent on 2005 – attending the nine finals in four states. The Toyota AFL Grand Final drew a crowd of 97,431.

The marketing campaign for the finals was based around a 'Glory in September' theme and the television commercials focused on

the sacrifices players had made to reach the finals. The 'Glory in September' theme was extended to the AFL website and the AFL 'Live' site at Federation Square where more than 160,000 people took part in Grand Final activities over the last week of September.

There was also strong attendance at other key events with the Grand Final experience extending over the full week. More than 100,000 people attended the Grand Final parade, while 4000 people watched the Grand Final on a big screen at Punt Road Oval. The crowd grew to 12,000 people after the game to watch Thirsty Merc and Mark Seymour perform before welcoming the 2006 premiers, the West Coast Eagles, on stage.

The 1980s *Flashdance* star Irene Cara was the highlight of the Toyota AFL Grand Final pre-match entertainment, thanks to the support of partner Foster's, while a host of Australian rock icons from the Countdown Revolution tour, including John Paul Young, Daryl Braithwaite, Joe Camilleri and Shane Howard, and the finalists from *Australian Idol*, were also featured.

Dreamtime at the 'G

While not a themed round in 2006, Dreamtime at the 'G was a wonderful example of the AFL working with clubs and other partners to deliver a strong message and big crowd.

Dreamtime at the 'G is a joint project involving the AFL, Essendon, Richmond and AFL SportsReady, with the objective of recognising and celebrating the role Indigenous players have had in the game, while also demonstrating how Australian Football can build bridges between cultures in the spirit of reconciliation. Conducted in round six, Dreamtime at the 'G attracted a crowd of 58,439 (up 43 per cent on a like-for-like basis) and generated enormous media coverage and sensational support from the Ten Network, which broadcast the match and the pre-game entertainment.

The game was sponsored by the Federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' Indigenous employment unit and also included:

- **The Long Walk** – with people invited to join a walk from Birrarung Marr over the footbridge and onto the MCG arena for the pre-match entertainment.
- **Welcome to Country ceremony** – which was conducted just before the start of the game with a ceremonial presentation to both captains on behalf of the traditional owners of the land.
- **Pre-match entertainment** – featuring Christine Anu, Paul Kelly, Renee Geyer, Kutcha Edwards and Peter Garrett joined by Michael Long and Catherine Freeman.

Commonwealth Games – AFL club captains

Australian Football had a major role in the opening of the Commonwealth Games with our AFL club captains proudly taking part in the final stages of the Commonwealth Games baton relay.

The sight of the AFL captains walking along the Yarra to thunderous applause before handing over the baton to Australian Football Hall of Fame Legend Ron Barassi was inspiring stuff – and ensured Australian Football had a key spot in the biggest television event of 2006 – and one of Melbourne's magical moments.

It was a wonderful experience for the captains and an incredible showcase for Australia's biggest participation sport.

Commonwealth Games and our volunteers

The AFL paid tribute to the 15,000 volunteers who helped to make the Commonwealth Games such a success by joining with the Victorian Government and our premier corporate partner Toyota to offer the volunteers tickets to AFL games in recognition of their service.

The volunteers had the choice of a ticket to a game at Telstra Dome the week after the Games finished or to five matches at the MCG. The AFL again thanks the volunteers for their efforts in making the Commonwealth Games such a showcase event in this country.

Media relations and issues management

The AFL's Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs Department worked proactively to both service the needs of the largest day-to-day media body of any organisation in the country and presents the AFL's work and future direction strategy to the wider football community.

In 2006, the media department gathered senior journalists from around the country on a regular basis to brief them on major issues, such as the annual release of the fixture, key strategy documents such as the *Next Generation* financial package, AFL Tribunal reforms, AFL Commission meetings and meetings with club presidents and CEOs.

Department members also traveled to all states to provide briefings, and worked with the AFL umpiring department to present a DVD on umpiring instructions and interpretations to the widest possible audience but with an emphasis on match-day commentators.

Media conferences and match-specific promotional work was heavily centred on the pre-season NAB Cup and the finals. AFL-organised media conferences were scheduled before each match of the NAB Cup, to heighten interest upon the return to a new season, while all clubs competing in the finals took part in captain/coach conferences to launch the finals.

During the off-season, the NAB AFL Draft was a major focus, beginning with the NAB AFL Draft Camp in Canberra and focusing heavily on the leading 10-15 contenders for first-round selection. This year there were more than 1100 stories in newspapers across the country and more than 250 radio or television interviews on the Draft.

The number of journalists working across print, radio and television in the football industry has grown exponentially over the last decade and the competition for breaking stories between all media outlets is extremely robust. There were more than 1500 accredited media involved in the reporting and broadcasting of the AFL competition in 2006.

The AFL's Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs



BARRY HALL HALL: Sydney full-forward Barry Hall introduced interested Sydneysiders to Australian Football through a clever television and online campaign.

Department was again the primary resource for media seeking information, and had the responsibility of managing the AFL's media direction and also to proactively promote the key messages and explain the direction and vision of the AFL.

In 2006, a corporate affairs manager, Brian Walsh, was appointed to assist in dealing with issues faced by the AFL and AFL clubs. Significant issues in 2006 included the court case surrounding the AFL's Illicit Drugs Policy, the AFL Commission decision on the result of the St Kilda-Fremantle match in Launceston, further reforms to the AFL Tribunal and Match Review Panel system, changes to the Laws of the Game for 2006, disciplinary action taken on the International Rules Series, and AFL Commission assistance packages to several clubs.

He was also responsible for developing the communications plan for the *Next Generation* strategy. In all cases, the department worked to present the AFL's actions and views to the football community and all stakeholders, while aiming to ensure the media was serviced responsibly, accurately and quickly.

Sydney Initiatives

One of the initiatives to come out of Sydney in 2006 was the establishment of the Sydney marketing group – a drawing together of people from the AFL, Sydney Swans, NSW Government, broadcast and media partners and also key corporate partners in the Sydney market.

The group looked specifically at the challenges of marketing to a Sydney audience and how each partner was able to leverage events or activities to support the general marketing of Australian Football. Meeting three times, the group provided a stronger focus for activities and coordinated support for initiatives such as the finals and the release of the Barry Hall Hall campaign. The success of this group saw a similar initiative with our partners in the Queensland market.

Barry Hall Hall

This television and online campaign was launched late in the season with “Professor” Barry Hall providing a unique and light-hearted introduction to the AFL for those Sydneysiders still wondering what the great game of Australian Football is all about.

The cheeky television commercials were run over the last four rounds and also during the finals and presented the Sydney full-forward as head of the fictitious Barry Hall Hall, centre for AFL Fan Education and Excellence since 2006.

A website was also set up barryhallhall.com.au and more than 3000 people signed up to receive information on matches and football news from the site. Members of the Sydney marketing group ensured the commercials were featured extensively across Network Ten, on Austereo radio stations and in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Coverage of the Swans

Media coverage of the Sydney Swans continued to grow in 2006 and no better example was the week leading up to the Toyota AFL Grand Final when the Swans appeared on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* on six out of the seven days. With greater emphasis on seeding stories and also providing greater opportunities for Sydney media to speak to and interview visiting players and coaches, the coverage continued to expand.

Publicity and promotions

The publicity and promotions managers in the northern and southern markets were kept busy in 2006, ensuring marketing and media activities continued to support the game. Some of those activities deserve special mention:

NSW/ACT, Gold Coast and the Northern Territory

- A further three community camps were held in NSW (the Swans in Wollongong, Carlton in Newcastle and Collingwood in Western Sydney) and one in the ACT (Kangaroos).
- The season launch in NSW, with Andrew Demetriou handing the premiership flag to Sydney Swans chairman Richard Colless at the Sydney Opera House.
- The inaugural AFL Sydney talent camp held at St Ignatius’ Riverview.
- The AFL Women’s National Championship held in Sydney.
- The Swans-Collingwood match at Telstra Stadium was promoted as a major game and resulted in more than 60,000 people attending.
- A strong ‘Welcome to the AFL’ promotion also saw 2400 new participants invited to the match and a pre-match clinic. The tribute to education pre-match event also saw students from schools throughout Sydney’s south-west take part.
- The Swans’ 25-year anniversary cocktail party, featuring media and celebrities to highlight the Swans’ time in the harbour city.
- The launch of the Blacktown Olympic Park development, which saw the NSW Government, Blacktown City Council, the AFL and Cricket NSW join forces to build new facilities.
- Facilitating the media partnerships to support the successful return of football to the Gold Coast Stadium, Carrara, and the engagement of the local supporter base and media interest.

Southern markets

- Support for the community camps and increased media activity, which saw a record amount of newspaper space devoted to the 16 club camps.
- Media support for the Indigenous youth tour to South Africa, which again saw strong coverage in both Australia and South Africa media outlets.
- Continuing the promotion of the celebrity NAB AFL Auskick match in April and extending the promotion of it.
- Support for the themed rounds and season launch, particularly the heritage round, which saw tremendous “buy-in” from television programs that took up the 1980s theme.
- Expansion of the Dreamtime at the ‘G game, which resulted in 58,439 people attending and a pre-game entertainment package broadcast on Network Ten.
- Team jumpers signed by the 100 newly listed AFL players were distributed to their grassroots clubs.
- The development and promotion of a devoted green shirt round to highlight the work of young umpires in the community.
- The launch of the Medibank 1Seven program with Netball Australia, Cricket Australia and the support of Medibank Private to encourage healthy lifestyles among school children.
- Organising many of the interviews and promotion of the NAB AFL Draft Camp and the NAB AFL Draft, which resulted in more than 1100 newspaper articles and more than 250 radio or television interviews.

AFL World

The AFL Hall of Fame and Sensation had a number of changes in 2006 resulting in increased patronage and improved efficiency.

A new management team was appointed to AFL World, including a new general manager, sales and marketing manager, a new education manager to manage school visits and a full-time curator who has undertaken the management of the AFL collection, together with the development and co-ordination of exhibitions/displays.

There were also new interactive displays and the Walk of Fame. These changes resulted in significant increases in attendances. On Grand Final eve, a new daily record attendance of 1533 visitors was recorded while the venue recorded growth of about 11 per cent in general admission visitation. The increase in visitors in the education segment was up by 72 per cent compared to 2005.

AFL World was also used for two AFL multicultural days, resulting in about 900 children attending the venue during May and September. The Hall of Fame exhibition was updated to reflect the inclusion of the 2006 inductees and the elevation of Jock McHale (2005) and Darrel Baldock (2006) to Legend status.

AFL World was also the venue for a number of major AFL functions, including the closing dinner for the AFL national game development conference.



AFL FOUNDATION

Recognising its responsibility to the broader community, the AFL established the AFL Foundation to be of assistance to people and organisations less fortunate than others. The broad vision covers three specific focuses:

- Regional and rural towns.
- Disadvantaged youth.
- Indigenous Australians.

In late 2005, the AFL Foundation had a significant review of its operations and community strategies. One of the key outcomes of this review was to appoint a CEO to lead the next stage of development. Derek Linsell was subsequently appointed to this role. In 2006, he oversaw many noteworthy achievements and exciting initiatives.

AFL/FRRR community grants

The AFL Foundation joined with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) to create a pool of about \$200,000 to provide grants to assist the growth of community wellbeing in rural, isolated and disadvantaged communities around the country.

Forty nine applications were received from sporting and community organisations in five different states, and 22 grants of up to \$10,000 were approved for a diverse range of projects. These grants will have a significant impact on the development of healthy communities in isolated and disadvantaged areas. For instance, this year's grants included the construction of a shower block at the Tolmie Sports Ground in Victoria; wheelchair access mounting ramp and administration shed for the Riding for the Disabled Association of Western Australia; travel and support for disadvantaged community members at the Coober Pedy Football Club in South Australia, and a health management program at Boggabilla Central School in NSW.

AFL staff workplace program

During the year, AFL staff members around Australia were asked to nominate social issues to which they would like to make a positive contribution through financial support and personal involvement.

It was eventually decided that family violence was to be the focus of an AFL staff community program. Family violence, one of the tragic and all too often hidden aspects of Australian life, is increasingly being identified as a major problem in our community. It was considered to be a good fit with the AFL's Respect and Responsibility Policy towards women.

The AFL Foundation is now developing a program through which staff members can participate more directly in making a difference. AFL staff members will be encouraged to donate money to assist organisations providing education and support in this area. Staff donations towards this project have already been used to provide Christmas gifts and donations to refuges for victims of family violence.

Work is being done to identify organisations already working in the area of family violence with infrastructures, which will enable AFL staff and partners to become more directly involved in combating this tragic social problem.



COMMUNITY MINDED: The AFL Foundation and Tattersall's named Tiger Joel Bowden winner of the 2006 AFL Community Leadership Award for his volunteer work with young people in Richmond's high-rise flats.

AFL community leadership awards

Each year Tattersall's provides \$16,000 for the AFL community leadership awards, which recognise and acknowledge the valuable volunteer work many AFL players do in the community of their own volition. This year's winner was Richmond's Joel Bowden for his work with young people from multicultural backgrounds living in the Richmond high-rise flats. Runners-up were Fremantle's Troy Cook, Hawthorn's Richie Vandenberg and Clint Bizzell and other Melbourne players involved with the Reach Foundation and projects to assist people affected by the 2004 tsunami in Asia.

Youth mentoring

Disadvantaged youth were also the focus of a pilot program initiated by the AFL Foundation in partnership with Wesley Mission Melbourne. The AFL Foundation approached Wesley Mission with a proposal to offer mentoring by AFL umpires to youth who do not have the support and guidance necessary during the formative adolescent years.

The program offers young people the chance to meet regularly with a team of AFL umpires and learn from their experiences in life and sport. Umpires Chris Donlon, Damien Sully, Shaun Ryan, Brett Allen and Chris Kamolins met regularly with five young people. The program was designed to provide opportunities for the umpires and the boys, aged 11-17, to get to know each other and begin to build mutual trust and respect. The boys participated in umpire training and education programs and also attended on match days as guests of the umpires.

The response from the boys was both positive and appreciative, as was the feedback from those who work with these boys in other areas of their lives.

AFL FOUNDATION

AFL youth homelessness project

Throughout the year a number of AFL players including Richmond's Joel and Patrick Bowden, Essendon's Mark Bolton, Collingwood's Paul Licuria and the Kangaroos' Glenn Archer worked with the Salvation Army in Melbourne feeding the homeless every Wednesday night. As a result of this experience, these players saw the plight of many of the homeless and decided to act.

October, 2006, saw the public announcement of an innovative enterprise in partnership with the AFLPA and the Victorian Department of Human Services.

This \$6 million project will provide a purpose-built facility for homeless youth in inner Melbourne. More than just a roof over the head, this home will provide many opportunities for homeless youth to build relationships and gain skills to help them avoid the downward spiral of homelessness and unemployment, and the many other attendant social problems that inevitably inflict those whose adolescence is spent on the street.

After discussions with the Office of Housing and Minister Candy Broad, the Victorian Government committed \$3 million to the project over the next five years and the AFL Foundation and the AFLPA undertook between them to raise another \$3 million during the same period.

This project will make an important contribution to the urgent social needs of Melbourne's homeless youth. It will provide a forum for AFL players to become practically involved in meeting the needs of vulnerable and marginalised members of our community.

This innovative project demonstrates the immense value of collaborative ventures between major sporting organisations like the AFL, Victorian Government and business groups. The long-term vision is to provide an AFL house for the homeless in every state.

Down syndrome

The AFL Foundation, the AFL umpiring department, the AFL Umpires' Association and the Down Syndrome Association of Victoria developed a program to educate the public about the functional capabilities of people with Down syndrome by having them involved in AFL matches.

The program involves young people with Down syndrome working with the umpires' trainers on match-day. They were provided official AFL umpires' tracksuits, which they wore proudly, and met the umpires in the rooms before the game. They entered the ground with the umpires, joined the umpires during the breaks and after the game and assisted the umpires' trainers throughout the game.

It is hoped that such programs will contribute to the broadening of acceptance of disabled people in the community. Letters and phone calls following this pilot program bear testimony to its positive impact on those who participated, and to those who witnessed the enthusiastic involvement of the young people.

Promoting employment among Indigenous leaders

During the year the AFL Foundation applied successfully for a grant of \$55,000 from the Victorian Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for the purpose of researching ways of developing *genuine* and *sustainable* employment opportunities for Indigenous Australian leaders.

The AFL Foundation engaged the services of Mandala Career Brokers, a specialist in the area of constructive partnerships between Indigenous Australians, employers and communities. Mandala Career Brokers has worked with a range of employers and groups to develop employment and career pathway initiatives for Indigenous Australians.

The express purpose of its involvement is to develop an Indigenous employment strategy that will provide real jobs, careers and vocational education for Indigenous Australians, and encourage AFL partners to increase their employment of Indigenous Australians. We want to provide opportunities for leaders to develop in the environment of effective employment.

It is anticipated that the initial findings of this research will be presented in early 2007, and that these findings will provide insights and understandings to guide the progress of this important program.

This program illustrates the AFL Foundation's desire to develop innovative projects that offer the Foundation and its partners the opportunity for more direct engagement with major challenges in our community. We believe such programs are more likely to bring about long-term transformation in the lives of disadvantaged groups within Australian society, through the application of AFL resources and the AFL brand.



MAKING AN IMPACT: AFL umpires (from left) Simon Meredith, Stuart Wenn and Michael Avon welcome Duane Wilks and Australian music star Olivia Newton-John, guests of the AFL at the round 15 Carlton-Western Bulldogs match. Duane took part in a program to help integrate people with Down syndrome.

AFL SPORTSREADY

AFL SportsReady achieved a significant milestone in 2006 – notching up the 4000th traineeship provided to a young Australian in the sports industry. It is an amazing record – and one that continues to position AFL SportsReady as one of the biggest organisations providing young people with employment opportunities.

AFL SportsReady is a not-for-profit employment and training organisation established in 1995 as a joint initiative between the AFL and the Federal Government following a suggestion by Essendon coach Kevin Sheedy. It provides young people with meaningful workplace opportunities and is the leading group-training organisation for trainee recruitment, placement, skills and education in the sports industry and covers controlling bodies, clubs and the retail sector.

Employment and training is provided across three categories:

- School-based apprenticeships for final-year students hoping to secure employment in a sports-related industry.
- AFL SportsReady traineeships for male and female school-leavers wishing to work in sports and sports-related industries. Fields for traineeships include administration, information technology, marketing, retail, fitness, sport and recreation including event management and horticulture.
- Indigenous employment, with a program designed to create employment for young Indigenous Australians via traineeships.

Other highlights of the AFL SportsReady program in 2006 included:

AFL Player Apprenticeship Program

Eighty-eight players participated in the AFL players' apprenticeship program in its inaugural year. The players received a nationally recognised certificate in career-orientated participation. The program assists all first- and second-year players and rookies to make the transition into professional football smoother.

Next Goal career transition program

The Next Goal career transition program, an initiative of AFL SportsReady, has accepted 140 players since it was started five years ago. The program provides workplace opportunities for players in the middle to later stages of their playing careers. Of the 140 players,

80 successfully completed the 30-day work placement experience with 80 per cent of them gaining part-time or full-time employment from this work exploration. Last year saw 30 players join the program.

Internship program

In its first year of operation, the internship program provides AFL players with work exploration for a 10-day period. The program accepted 16 players in various industries.

AFL SportsReady helped 140 AFL-listed players with their work exploration and career transition in 2006 and continued to work in partnership on a number of programs with the AFL and the AFLPA.

Dreamtime at The 'G

AFL SportsReady's commitment to the Indigenous employment program was reflected in the Dreamtime at the 'G game. An AFL SportsReady initiative, this game continued to grow and gain wider recognition.

Indigenous Employment Program

This program grew significantly over the past 18 months. About 17 per cent of our 530 trainees around Australia are Indigenous. This is one of the most successful Indigenous employment programs in Australia. The program is sponsored by the Department of Employment Workplace Relations and continued to support those in the community and in remote areas of Australia.

Partnerships with AFL Game Development

AFL SportsReady continued to work collaboratively with the AFL Game Development Department, with its traineeship model proving to be successful with state bodies.

Kevin Sheedy Scholarship

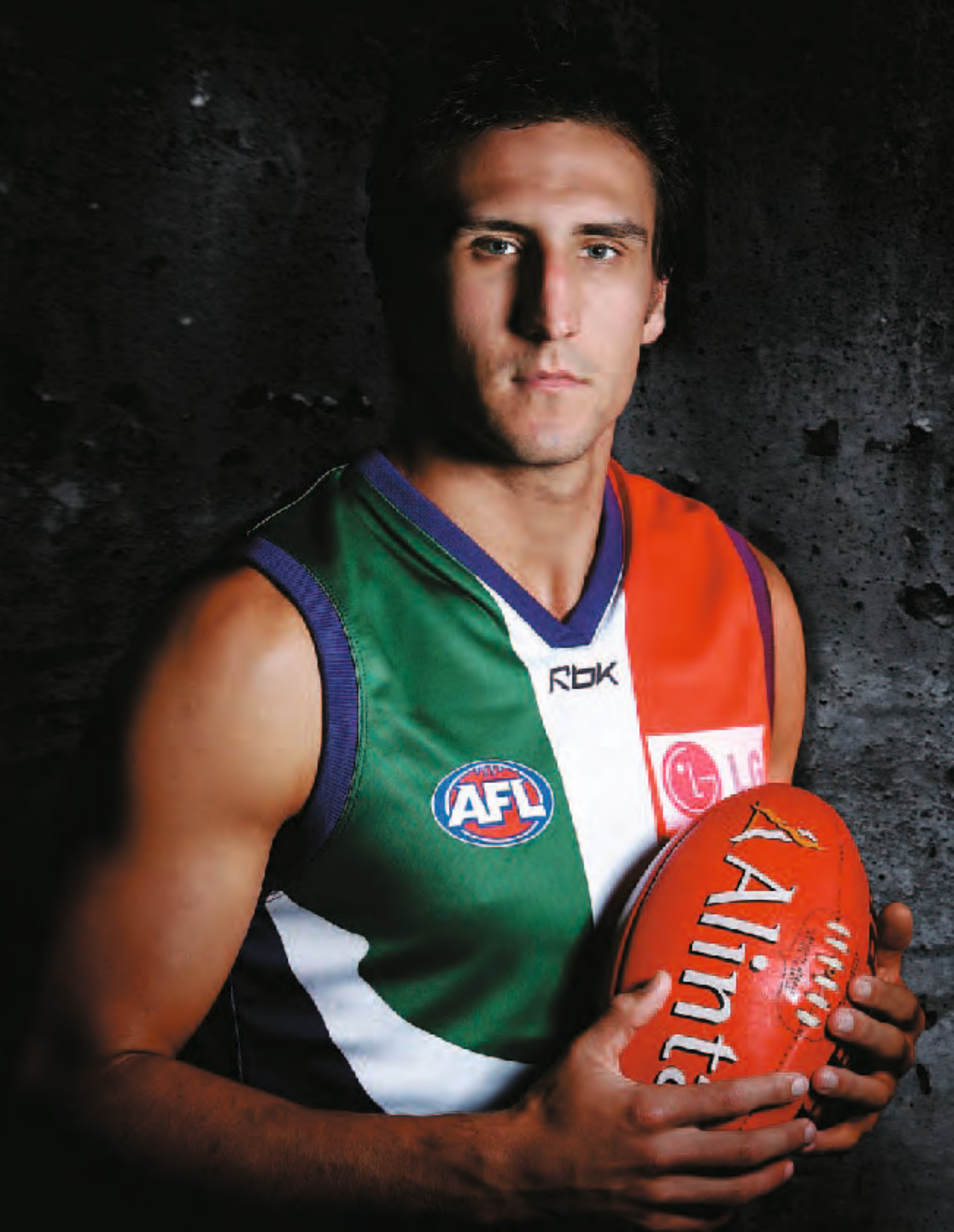
The Kevin Sheedy Scholarship is an initiative to benefit those who may have difficulties finding long-term employment. The scholarship has benefited five recipients so far, all with varying circumstances. In 2007, the scholarship will support a young Indigenous man who will act as team manager for the new Tiwi Island football team playing in the Northern Territory Football League.



OPENING DOORS: Kangaroos Drew Petrie (left) and Leigh Harding during their work placement stint with Victoria Police; Melbourne's Nathan Brown, who spent time with the Country Fire Authority, and Hawthorn players taking part in a team-building exercise. Photographs featuring Kangaroos and Melbourne players courtesy *Herald Sun*.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Richmond's Patrick and Joel Bowden, along with other AFL players, worked in various community programs during 2006.





FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – IAN ANDERSON

LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

GENERAL MANAGER – ANDREW DILLON

Star Fremantle forward Matthew Pavlich had a stellar 2006, kicking 71 goals and winning his third best and fairest award.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH CONFIRMED

Another record profit, combined with an ongoing focus on streamlined systems to help all clubs and the game in general, were the highlights of 2006.

The key financial highlights for the 2006 financial year were:

- AFL revenue increased in all areas of the business to reach a total of \$215 million.
- A record operating profit of \$140 million.
- A net profit of \$7.6 million, an increase of \$1 million over the previous year.
- Borrowings reduced by \$25 million to \$15 million.
- Net assets increased by \$5 million to \$58 million.

The following amounts were also transferred from the operating profit to reserves:

- \$3.6 million to the facilities and development reserve to be used to invest in football-related facility developments.
- \$1.8 million to the strategic partnership reserve to fund AFL club and industry initiatives to grow and improve business operations.

Financial performance of AFL clubs

The AFL continued to work closely with all clubs to help them to improve their financial performances. Better financial management has led to most clubs improving their financial results and has resulted in one of the best years ever in terms of the aggregate financial results of all clubs. As was the case last year, 12 of the 16 clubs recorded a profitable result. We are confident that the increased distributions to clubs which have been set for the next five years will lead to clubs further improving their financial performances.

Shared services initiatives

The AFL continued to work on a number of initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the AFL industry. Progress was made in the following areas:

- Payroll processing – the AFL now handles the processing for seven clubs and three state football bodies.
- Financial processing – the AFL now handles the accounting processing for two clubs and three state football bodies.
- Membership processing – the AFL now handles the membership processing for three clubs.

Corporate governance

In 2006, the AFL undertook a major review of its corporate governance practices, in conjunction with KPMG. This review resulted in a number of changes to the AFL's practices and procedures.

Full details of these new corporate governance principles are described separately on pages 24-25.

It is proposed that all the AFL clubs also adopt these core corporate governance principles in the future.

Borrowings

Since 2000, the AFL has been a net borrower of up to \$85 million, which has been used to fund a number of asset acquisitions (the AFL's offices and the Telstra Dome option), as well as to fund pre-payment of the increased player payments in 2000 and 2001 ahead of the TV broadcasting arrangements that commenced in 2002. Since then, it has been the AFL's intention to be debt-free by the end of 2006. This target was achieved in November, 2006.

Insurance and risk management

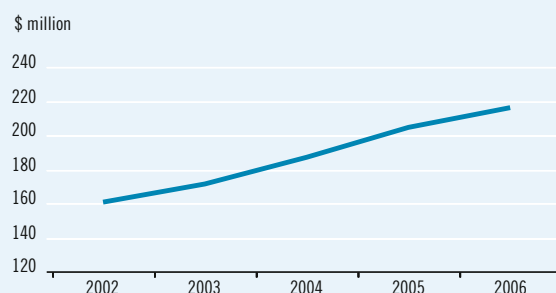
The AFL has continued to manage the insurance activities for the Australian Football industry, covering the AFL competition through to local community football. At all levels, costs have been contained and in most cases, have dropped considerably over the last three years.

As well, the AFL has driven a number of new risk management initiatives including:

- Setting up risk management committees at the 16 AFL clubs to focus on improved business practices to provide safer and more secure working environments, which should also result in lowering the number of claims.
- Providing online risk management training aids for all community clubs.

REVENUE

Up 6 per cent
to \$215 million

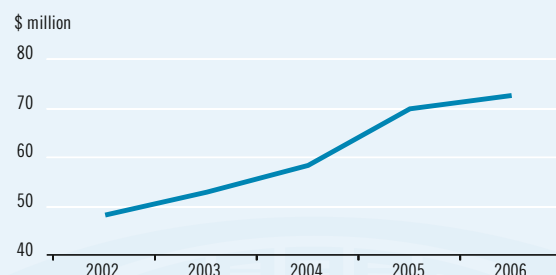


Revenue grew by \$12 million with the major areas of change being:

- Sponsorship and broadcasting (up \$7 million).
- AFL Finals Series (up \$3 million).
- Consumer products (up \$1 million).

EXPENDITURE*

Up 4 per cent
to \$72 million

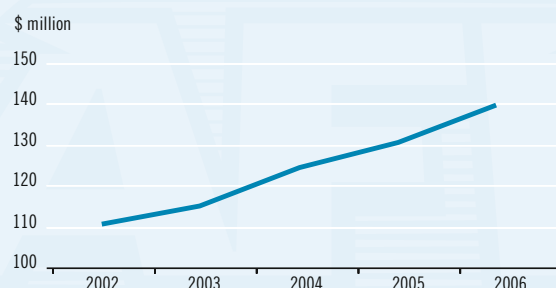


Expenditure grew by \$3 million with most of the increases being driven by the increases in revenue (sponsorship costs, finals series costs, etc).

* Expenditure excludes interest costs on borrowings

OPERATING PROFIT

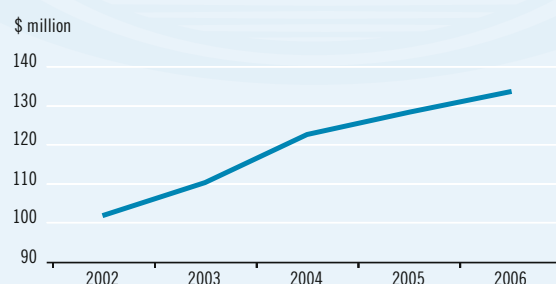
Up 8 per cent
to \$140 million



The AFL's operating profit increased by \$10 million to \$140 million. This increase in profit enabled greater distributions to all stakeholders.

DISTRIBUTIONS

Up 7 per cent
to \$133 million

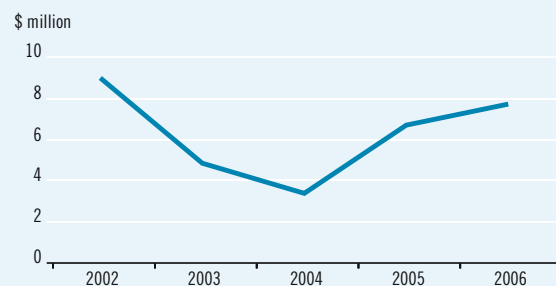


Distributions increased by \$9 million as follows:

- Payments to clubs (up \$5 million).
- Payments to AFLPA (up \$1 million).
- Game development grants (up \$2.5 million).
- Ground improvements (up \$0.5 million).

NET PROFIT

Up 16 per cent
to \$7.6 million



The AFL's net profit increased by \$1 million to \$7.6 million. The proceeds went to repaying borrowings.



KEY VENUE: The AFL provided significant financial support to clubs and venues such as Docklands' Telstra Dome in 2006.

Payments to clubs

The AFL provided significant payments and financial support to AFL clubs in 2006. These payments included the following:

- A base distribution to all clubs which totalled \$71.1 million, an increase of \$2.8 million (4.1 per cent).
- The AFL made another payment from the proceeds of the sale of Waverley Park to the clubs totalling \$4.8 million. The payment of \$0.3 million per club brings the total paid to date of \$1.5 million per club. A further \$0.5 million per club is due to be paid over the next two years.
- A total of \$5.9 million was paid from the AFL's Annual Special Distribution fund to the Western Bulldogs (\$1.7 million), Kangaroos (\$1.4 million), Melbourne (\$1 million), Sydney Swans (\$0.5 million), Hawthorn (\$0.25 million), Richmond (\$0.25 million) and Port Adelaide (\$0.25 million), with \$0.6 million paid to Telstra Dome to assist clubs playing at this venue.
- Other payments to clubs included amounts paid from the AFL's internet rights agreement, ground buy-out agreements, distribution of the AFL's signage rights at Telstra Dome and to help clubs develop the game around Australia.

2006 Payments

Club	Base	Other	Total
Adelaide	4,442,316	813,250	5,255,566
Brisbane Lions	4,442,316	554,223	4,996,539
Carlton	4,442,316	2,587,633	7,029,949
Collingwood	4,442,316	1,981,165	6,423,481
Essendon	4,442,316	1,435,336	5,877,652
Fremantle	4,442,316	766,026	5,208,342
Geelong	4,442,316	1,090,482	5,532,798
Hawthorn	4,442,316	1,175,422	5,617,738
Kangaroos	4,442,316	2,853,799	7,296,115
Melbourne	4,442,316	2,109,371	6,551,687
Port Adelaide	4,442,316	709,724	5,152,040
Richmond	4,442,316	1,749,519	6,191,835
St Kilda	4,442,316	1,785,552	6,227,868
Sydney Swans	4,442,316	1,635,876	6,078,192
West Coast Eagles	4,442,316	1,087,652	5,529,968
Western Bulldogs	4,442,316	3,146,824	7,589,140
Total	71,077,056	25,481,855	96,558,911

PLAYING A KEY ROLE

The expertise of the AFL's Legal and Business Affairs Department was required in a host of areas in 2006.

It was another productive year for the Legal and Business Affairs Department in 2006, with significant involvement in the renewal of the AFL's naming rights partner sponsorship, as well as negotiations and finalisation of a number of other new and renewed sponsorship deals. The department also played a major role in negotiations for the television and radio broadcast agreements for 2007-2011, as well as the new media rights agreement with Telstra. It also provided legal services, commercial advice and support to all departments across the AFL, and worked with AFL clubs and affiliated state bodies on various projects.

The team was involved in the extension to the AFL's relationship with Toyota, while long-term relationships with Foster's and Qantas are ongoing. Further sponsorship deals were negotiated and settled with Sony, Skins, Sherrin, the City of Melbourne, Medibank Private, InterContinental Hotels, Kellogg's and Origin Energy.

The AFL's Consumer Products Department also had a busy year, with legal and business affairs staff working closely with it on protecting the AFL's portfolio of trademarks and designs, as well as helping it renew, extend and enter new licensing arrangements.

The Legal and Business Affairs Department worked closely with game development staff across the NAB AFL Auskick and the new Medibank 1Seven programs; provided expertise on funding grant applications and agreements; worked with the international game development committee, and provided advice on the introduction of the New South Wales and international scholarship schemes.

As well as supporting the Broadcasting, Strategy and Major Projects Department with venue arrangements for Aurora Stadium, Gold Coast Stadium, Carrara, and Manuka Oval, the Legal and Business Affairs Department was also involved in the re-negotiation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the AFL Players' Association – a process that dominated much of 2006 and included CEO Andrew Demetriou, General Manager, Football Operations, Adrian Anderson, and General Manager, Finance and Administration, Ian Anderson. The department also worked with the Football Operations Department on the AFL Draft and Trade Review Committee, as well as the annual AFL Tribunal review.

The AFL's expanding shared services portfolio (payroll, finance and membership) offered to a number of AFL clubs also required ongoing support.

The department performed its usual support role for the marketing and communications team, providing assistance with protection of the brand and use of AFL intellectual property in marketing initiatives by the AFL and its clubs and sponsors, keeping the AFL's commercial operations guidelines current and effective. It also provided advice on terms and conditions for the AFL's wide range of competitions, promotions and other brand initiatives.

Other highlights for the Legal and Business Affairs Department included:

- The successful implementation of and compliance with 2006 Grand Final ticketing scheme in conjunction with the Victorian Government.
- Continued involvement with the working party on establishing the AFL's Respect and Responsibility Policy.
- Continued assistance to the corporate hospitality and events department to expand AFL Grand Final week activities including the September Club, the 'Live' site at Federation Square, the *Australian Idol* concert and 'Seriously' party.
- Involvement in Western Sydney facility projects including Blacktown Olympic Park and Withers Road Reserve.
- Involvement in agreements for special project fund matters including service agreements, funding agreements and facility agreements.
- Renegotiation of the umpires' Collective Bargaining Agreement and continued provision of advice to the AFL's umpiring department.



BRAND POWER: The AFL's Legal and Business Affairs team played a key role in extending some of the AFL's long-term relationships.

AWARDS, RESULTS AND FAREWELLS

Sydney's Adam Goodes had a stellar season, capped off by a second Brownlow Medal, confirming his status as one of the game's elite players.





THE PREMIERS

The West Coast Eagles and Sydney Swans put on another fine Grand Final display but the Eagles were in front when it mattered.

After the heartbreak of a four-point loss in the 2005 Grand Final, the West Coast Eagles answered in the best way a year later, downing the Sydney Swans by one point in the 2006 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

It was another instalment in what has become an intriguing rivalry between the Swans and Eagles, with just 12 points separating the clubs in their last five meetings.

It was clear from the outset that the Eagles had premiership glory on their mind in 2006. West Coast won 10 of its first 11 home and away matches, before winning five of its last six to finish on top of the ladder after 22 rounds.

After a loss against the Swans in the first week of the finals, the Eagles easily disposed of a young Western Bulldogs side at home, and then beat the Crows at AAMI Stadium to book another date with nemesis Sydney.

In front of more than 97,000 at the MCG, the Eagles began the 2006 Grand Final like winners. With Ashley Hansen booting the first major six minutes in, West Coast proceeded to kick four of the first five goals to lead by 16 points at the first break.

The string of tight contests between the sides looked to be over, as the Eagles continued to dominate in the second stanza. With Dean Cox on top in the middle and Andrew Embley starting several scoring forays, West Coast pushed out to a 29-point lead. The ever-reliable Swans looked shaken.

But one thing we have learned about the Swans is that they don't go down without a fight.

Trailing by 25 points at the major break, Sydney lifted in the premiership quarter. An early Michael O'Loughlin goal, which came just moments after an Adam Schneider tackle on Michael Braun, sparked the Swans into action.

After minutes of goal-for-goal action, Sydney slowly began to get on top. Warhorse Brett Kirk was everywhere, and Nick Davis was damaging in front of the big sticks. The Swans were within 11 points at the last change.

Another heart-stopping finish, as unlikely as it seemed less than an hour before, was on the cards.

It took Sydney, through an Adam Goodes goal, just 14 seconds into the last term to reduce the margin to less than a goal.

Schneider kicked another soon after, but the Eagles were far from done. A Steven Armstrong snap gave his side a seven-point buffer, but a Ryan O'Keefe goal reduced the margin to one point.

An inspirational Daniel Chick smother and shepherd helped Adam Hunter give his side some breathing space, but when Nick Malceski snapped another major for the relentless Swans, the Eagles had just over two minutes to hang on to their one-point lead.

Bodies flew in for one last attempt at premiership glory, but West Coast seemed more composed. As the ball was thrown back in near Sydney's goal, the siren blared, giving the Eagles their first premiership since 1994.

It was the first one-point Grand Final result in four decades, and one of the best deciders in the game's long history.

2006 Toyota AFL Grand Final

West Coast Eagles	4.2	8.7	10.10	12.13 (85)
Sydney Swans	1.4	4.6	8.11	12.12 (84)

BEST: West Coast Eagles – Embley, Cox, Kerr, Judd, Hansen, Waters, Cousins, Glass.
Sydney Swans – Kirk, Kennelly, Richards, McVeigh, Fosdike, Buchanan.

GOALS: West Coast Eagles – Lynch 3, Hansen 2, Cousins 2, Embley 2, Judd, Armstrong, Hunter. Sydney Swans – O'Loughlin 3, Davis 3, Mathews, Roberts-Thomson, Goodes, Schneider, O'Keefe, Malceski.

Umpires: Brett Allen, Darren Goldspink, Michael Vozzo.

Attendance: 97,431 at the MCG.

Norm Smith Medal: Andrew Embley (West Coast Eagles).



UP FOR GRABS: Sydney Swans forward Ryan O'Keefe and West Coast Eagles captain Chris Judd battle for possession during the 2006 Grand Final.



WEST COAST EAGLES

BACK ROW: Darren Glass, David Wirrpanda, Rowan Jones, Michael Braun, Adam Hunter, Adam Selwood, Brett Jones, Quinten Lynch, Dean Cox, Mark Seaby, Sam Butler, Beau Waters, Ashley Hansen.
FRONT ROW: Chad Fletcher, Ben Cousins, Andrew Embley, Chris Judd (captain), John Worsfold (coach), Steven Armstrong, Drew Banfield, Daniel Chick, Tyson Stenglein, Daniel Kerr.



SYDNEY SWANS

BACK ROW: Tadgh Kennelly, Nick Davis, Nic Fossdike, Sean Dempster, Jude Bolton, Ryan O'Keefe, Michael O'Loughlin, Darren Jolly, Stephen Doyle, Craig Bolton, Lewis Roberts-Thomson, Ted Richards, Barry Hall (co-captain). **FRONT ROW:** Leo Barry (co-captain), Nick Malceski, Luke Ablett, Adam Goodes, Brett Kirk (co-captain), Paul Roos (coach), Adam Schneider, Amon Buchanan, Jarrad McVeigh, Ben Mathews.



JOCK McHALE MEDAL

John Worsfold became only the sixth man in VFL/AFL history to captain and coach premiership teams.

It was a sight football fans had seen twice before – John Worsfold standing on the dais at the MCG on Grand Final day, holding up the premiership cup.

Only this time, Worsfold had his hands on the game's most coveted trophy, not as captain of the West Coast Eagles – as he did in 1992 and 1994 – but as coach, after he had guided his team to victory over the Sydney Swans.

It was West Coast's third premiership in its 20-year history.

The 38-year-old, who received the Jock McHale Medal as coach of the premiership team, became the first man since David Parkin at Hawthorn in 1978 to captain and later coach the same club to the flag. He has certainly won a place in the hearts of Eagles fans forever.

The premiership came in Worsfold's 120th game as coach, but he has enjoyed an impressive run of results ever since he took over the coaching reins from Ken Judge at the end of 2001 season, after 209 games as a player for the club.

The Eagles finished a lowly 14th in 2001 but under Worsfold they

have never missed a finals campaign, and advanced all the way to the Grand Final in 2005 before losing a thriller to the Swans.

One year on, both coach and team were determined not to miss out again. After taking top spot on the ladder, West Coast stumbled to a one-point qualifying final defeat to Sydney.

However, following an emphatic victory over the Bulldogs and a gutsy win against Adelaide at AAMI Stadium, Worsfold's men were back in the Grand Final to take on the Swans – again.

And this time, it was the Eagles who celebrated, holding off the fast-finishing Swans to win by a point.

Speaking immediately after the Grand Final, Worsfold was delighted with the efforts of his players.

"There is satisfaction that all the work we have put in during the year paid off," he said.

"We have been questioned at times, but we showed a lot of honesty.

"I had no doubt that the players put in the work required to win a premiership."



ELITE COMPANY: John Worsfold hugs star midfielder Ben Cousins after the West Coast Eagles' premiership win, adding to the coach's two flags he won as club captain in the 1990s.



NORM SMITH MEDAL

An injury on the eve of the finals, and even a paralysed vocal cord, could not stop Andrew Embley from winning the Norm Smith Medal.

As the 2006 finals series began, Andrew Embley must have wondered when, or even if, his luck would ever change. For the fourth year running, the tall wingman's season had been disrupted by injury on the eve of the finals campaign – this time, an AC joint problem ruling him out of the qualifying final against Sydney.

Worse still, the West Coast vice-captain couldn't speak above a whisper. After falling ill before round 19, it was later discovered that Embley was suffering from a paralysed vocal cord, making communication with his teammates on the field somewhat difficult.

It seemed unreasonable to expect too much from the star Eagle throughout the finals. Not that anyone told Embley.

Back in the starting line-up for the semi-final clash with the Western Bulldogs, Embley returned to form with 29 disposals in his team's crushing win.

A week later, he played a pivotal role in the come-from-behind preliminary final defeat of Adelaide, finishing the match with 24 possessions, nine marks and a couple of goals.

However, the 25-year-old saved his best performance for the MCG on Grand Final day.

It is a sign of Embley's versatility, as well as his huge engine, that he played all over the ground in the unforgettable showdown with the Swans.

He started the match in the forward line and then had several stints on the ball, before finishing the match in the backline, taking a crucial mark in the dying minutes of the game as Sydney threatened to snatch the lead.

He picked up 26 possessions, kicked two goals, and lit up the MCG with some rampaging runs up the ground.

Embley's reward – to go alongside his premiership medal – was the Norm Smith Medal, as he was judged best on ground.

He is the fourth West Coast player to win the Norm Smith Medal, following Peter Matera, Dean Kemp and Chris Judd.

2006 Norm Smith Medal voting

10	Andrew Embley	West Coast Eagles
8	Brett Kirk	Sydney Swans
6	Dean Cox	West Coast Eagles
3	Daniel Kerr	West Coast Eagles
2	Tadhg Kennelly	Sydney Swans
1	Beau Waters	West Coast Eagles

Judges: Rohan Connolly (*The Age*), Jenny McAsey (*The Australian*), Mark Maclure (774 ABC), Mike Sheahan (*Herald Sun*), Ray Wilson (*West Australian*).



FINALS HERO: Eagle Andrew Embley overcame injury to play his best game of September when it counted most – Grand Final day.



BROWNLOW MEDAL

Sydney's Adam Goodes became the 12th dual Brownlow Medallist in VFL/AFL history, and the first since Saint Robert Harvey.

The 2006 season delivered plenty of nail-biting results on the field, and the Brownlow Medal count was no different. Adam Goodes enhanced his reputation as one of the greats of the game by winning his second Brownlow Medal in a thrilling count at Melbourne's Crown Palladium, snaring three votes in the final round to edge out Bulldog Scott West.

Consistency and versatility were the secrets behind the Swan's success. The 194cm Goodes won the 2006 Brownlow playing predominantly in the midfield – with some spells in both defence and the forward line – in contrast to his 2003 win, when he spent most of the year in the ruck. Quick, mobile and a tireless runner, Goodes caused havoc for his opponents, and proved a nightmare to match up on.

Much like his team, he made a slow start to the season, failing to register a vote in the first five rounds. However, he quickly shot into contention when he claimed best on ground honours in four of the next five games.

For much of the count, it seemed that West – always a contender on Brownlow Medal night – would finally win the game's highest individual honour.

The popular Bulldog led from rounds 12 to 18, and again in round 20, but Goodes polled votes in rounds 17, 19, 20 and 21 to lead by one. West drew level with the Swan, thanks to one vote in the Bulldogs' win over Essendon but, in the final announcement of the night, Goodes sealed a second Brownlow when he was awarded maximum votes for his stunning individual effort against Carlton.

Rounding out the top five were West Coast Eagles midfielders Daniel Kerr and Chris Judd, and Bulldogs skipper Brad Johnson.

It was the latest chapter in a remarkable football journey for Goodes, who was drafted at No. 43 by Sydney in 1997. As well as two Brownlows, he was won two club champion awards, the AFL Rising Star award, is a dual All-Australian, and was a key member of the Swans' 2005 premiership team.

Goodes became just the 12th player to win the Brownlow Medal more than once and the first since St Kilda's Robert Harvey in 1997 and 1998. In 2006, Harvey joined Leigh Matthews and Gary Dempsey as the only players to have polled more than 200 Brownlow votes.

2006 Brownlow Medal placings

Player	Team	Count
Adam Goodes	Sydney Swans	26
Scott West	Western Bulldogs	23
Daniel Kerr*	West Coast Eagles	22
Chris Judd	West Coast Eagles	21
Brad Johnson	Western Bulldogs	19
Matthew Pavlich	Fremantle	15
Brendon Lade	Port Adelaide	15
Shaun Burgoyne	Port Adelaide	15
Paul Chapman	Geelong	14
Jonathan Brown	Brisbane Lions	13
Nathan Thompson	Kangaroos	13
Danyle Pearce	Port Adelaide	13
Sam Mitchell	Hawthorn	13
Ben Cousins	West Coast Eagles	13

*Ineligible

2006 Brownlow Medal club vote tallies

West Coast Eagles	96	St Kilda	66
Adelaide	93	Richmond	63
Sydney Swans	80	Geelong	58
Western Bulldogs	79	Brisbane Lions	57
Fremantle	77	Hawthorn	50
Collingwood	74	Carlton	46
Melbourne	71	Kangaroos	43
Port Adelaide	67	Essendon	36

UNSTOPPABLE: Swan Adam Goodes joined an elite few in the dual Brownlow Medallist club.





TOYOTA AFL PREMIERSHIP SEASON

The West Coast Eagles won the battle for the McClelland Trophy in a home and away season that saw a number of superb individual efforts.

For the second year running, the West Coast Eagles and Adelaide fought for top spot on the ladder after the home and away season. It was the Eagles (with a 17-5 win-loss record) who stormed home to win the McClelland Trophy in 2006, despite the Crows being two games clear after 16 rounds.

After an eight-game winning streak from rounds nine to 16, the Crows managed just two wins from their last six games as they battled injury and illness concerns.

Conversely, Fremantle rattled home to win its last nine rounds of the season, finishing fourth after 22 rounds.

Results from round one proved to be deceptive. The Bombers, Kangaroos and Blues all enjoyed convincing victories in their opening matches of the year, but they ended up occupying the last three places on the ladder at the completion of the premiership season. In fact, five of the bottom eight sides in 2006 had big victories in the first round of the year.

There were some outstanding individual performances in 2006. Again highlighting his amazing consistency, Bulldog Scott West finished the season with 643 possessions – 45 clear of his nearest rival, Carlton's Heath Scotland.

West and teammate Daniel Cross finished No. 1 and No. 2 on the handball list, racking up a combined 724 handballs in 22 games (32.9 per game).

After an injury-riddled 2005, St Kilda's Nick Riewoldt enjoyed one of his better years, finishing with a competition-best 206 marks after 22 rounds (9.4 per game).

Yet it was the Eagles' midfield that had the biggest influence in 2006. Four of their prime movers – Chris Judd, Ben Cousins, Daniel Kerr and Chad Fletcher – had a combined 1816 disposals in the premiership season, despite missing 13 games collectively.

The 2006 club best and fairest winners were:

Adelaide: Simon Goodwin

Carlton: Lance Whitnall

Essendon: Scott Lucas

Geelong: Paul Chapman

Kangaroos: Brady Rawlings

Port Adelaide: Brendon Lade

St Kilda: Nick Riewoldt

West Coast Eagles: Chris Judd

Brisbane Lions: Simon Black

Collingwood: Alan Didak

Fremantle: Matthew Pavlich

Hawthorn: Sam Mitchell

Melbourne: James McDonald

Richmond: Kane Johnson

Sydney Swans: Adam Goodes

Western Bulldogs: Brad Johnson

Official 2006 ladder (after round 22)

		For				Against					Home		Away		Streak	Scores		Av. margin		W<	L<	Plrs	R22
	P	W	L	D	G.B	Pts	G.B	Pts	%	Pts	W	L	W	L	W/L	High	Low	W	L	7pt	7pt	used	2005
1 West Coast Eagles	22	17	5	0	324.313	2257	273.236	1874	120.44%	68	9	2	8	3	1W	173	60	31	29	3	1	34	2
2 Adelaide	22	16	6	0	340.291	2331	237.218	1640	142.13%	64	9	2	7	4	1W	188	58	50	20	2	2	32	1
3 Fremantle	22	15	7	0	303.261	2079	267.291	1893	109.83%	60	9	2	6	5	9W	151	52	30	39	2	0	35	10
4 Sydney Swans	22	14	8	0	304.274	2098	240.190	1630	128.71%	56	6	5	8	3	2W	180	50	43	17	0	3	31	3
5 Collingwood	22	14	8	0	346.269	2345	285.255	1965	119.34%	56	9	2	5	6	3W	156	45	43	29	1	1	36	15
6 St Kilda	22	14	8	0	302.262	2074	250.252	1752	118.38%	56	7	4	7	4	2W	174	52	38	26	3	2	35	4
7 Melbourne	22	13	8	1	314.262	2146	282.265	1957	109.66%	54	8	3	5	5	1L	141	63	31	27	3	1	34	7
8 Western Bulldogs	22	13	9	0	340.271	2311	311.307	2173	106.35%	52	7	4	6	5	1W	167	55	32	31	1	1	33	9
9 Richmond	22	11	11	0	278.266	1934	323.307	2245	86.15%	44	6	5	5	6	1L	142	52	28	56	2	0	39	12
10 Geelong	22	10	11	1	290.242	1982	293.244	2002	99.00%	42	6	4	4	7	1L	142	44	39	37	1	3	37	6
11 Hawthorn	22	9	13	0	271.208	1834	308.292	2140	85.70%	36	6	5	3	8	4W	133	49	30	44	1	0	38	14
12 Port Adelaide	22	8	14	0	271.285	1911	309.297	2151	88.84%	32	4	7	4	7	1L	145	50	35	37	1	2	38	8
13 Brisbane Lions	22	7	15	0	260.284	1844	324.295	2239	82.36%	28	4	7	3	8	6L	147	38	31	41	1	0	39	11
14 Kangaroos	22	7	15	0	249.260	1754	317.265	2167	80.94%	28	5	6	2	9	4L	128	36	21	37	0	2	36	5
15 Essendon	22	3	18	1	291.275	2021	367.267	2469	81.86%	14	3	7	0	11	3L	160	50	25	29	0	3	36	13
16 Carlton	22	3	18	1	257.249	1791	354.291	2415	74.16%	14	2	9	1	9	4L	112	34	20	38	0	0	37	16



COLEMAN MEDAL

With 84 goals for the year, Brendan Fevola became only the second Carlton player to land the Coleman Medal.



SHARP SHOOTER: Carlton's Brendan Fevola kicked 89 goals for the Blues last season, becoming the club's second Coleman Medallist.

There wasn't much for Carlton to celebrate last season, but the Blues could at least boast the AFL's dominant goalkicker in 2006.

After two indifferent seasons in 2004 and 2005, Brendan Fevola roared back to form with 84 goals – almost a third of Carlton's goals in 2006. It was the first time in 41 years the Coleman Medallist had played for the AFL's bottom team since Hawthorn's John Peck topped the goalkicking in 1965.

Fevola kicked 14 more goals than his nearest rival, Bulldogs skipper Brad Johnson, who booted 70 majors in the premiership season, while St Kilda powerhouse Fraser Gehrig – the Coleman Medallist in 2004 and 2005 – finished third with 68 goals.

Fevola began the year in fine form with five goals in the shock round-one win over Melbourne before slotting six against Fremantle a week later. That set the pattern for a stellar season.

Other notable performances from the Blues' full-forward included a seven-goal haul to sink the Bombers in round seven and eight majors against the Hawks in round 19.

Fevola kicked nine bags of five or more during the season, and an incredible 64 more goals than any other Carlton player. He is only the second Blue to win the Coleman Medal, following in the footsteps of Tom Carroll who won the award in 1961 with 54 goals.

Fevola's total of 84 goals was the second highest by a Blues player in a season, behind only Alex Jesaulenko who finished 1970 with 100.

2006 leading goalkickers*

Brendan Fevola	Carlton	84	(84)
Brad Johnson	Western Bulldogs	70	(74)
Fraser Gehrig	St Kilda	68	(71)
Scott Lucas	Essendon	67	(67)
Barry Hall	Sydney Swans	67	(78)
Matthew Pavlich	Fremantle	63	(71)
David Neitz	Melbourne	61	(68)
Mark Williams	Hawthorn	60	(60)
Daniel Bradshaw	Brisbane Lions	59	(59)
Nick Riewoldt	St Kilda	58	(60)
Nathan Thompson	Kangaroos	54	(54)
Anthony Rocca	Collingwood	54	(55)

*Home and away goal tallies; full season totals in brackets.



NAB AFL RISING STAR MEDAL

Danyle Pearce became the first former rookie, and second Port Adelaide player, to win the NAB AFL Rising Star Medal.

Danyle Pearce's story should provide motivation to young footballers across the country. The speedy South Australian was overlooked by all 16 clubs in the 2004 NAB AFL Draft, with recruiters expressing concerns about his ball skills.

It was only when Port Adelaide drafted Pearce as a rookie for the 2005 season that he had the chance to pursue his AFL dream.

By the end of that year, Pearce was rewarded with a spot on the senior list and, 12 months later, he won the 2006 NAB AFL Rising Star Medal. Quite a rise to stardom for a player no one initially wanted.

Speaking after he won the medal, Pearce revealed the initial rejection had spurred him onto greater things.

"That's a big motivation – being told by everyone in the AFL that you're not good enough or you're not ready or you won't be ready to play in the AFL," he said.

The Power youngster won the award by 10 votes from Richmond's Andrew Raines, with Magpie Heath Shaw a vote further behind in third place.

Pearce played all 22 games for Port in 2006, winning a nomination for his round three performance against Fremantle, when he had 20 possessions, four tackles and kicked a goal.

Blessed with blistering pace, he spent the majority of the season playing on the ball or in the forward line. The speedster averaged 19 possessions and kicked 12 goals.

One of four nominees for the Power in 2006, Pearce is the second Port Adelaide player to win the award after Michael Wilson in 1997.



CHALLENGED: Danyle Pearce answered his critics by winning the NAB AFL Rising Star award last season.

2006 NAB AFL Rising Star Medal voting

Danyle Pearce	Port Adelaide	43
Andrew Raines	Richmond	33
Heath Shaw	Collingwood	32
Marc Murphy	Carlton	13
Clint Bartram	Melbourne	7
Grant Birchall	Hawthorn	5
Michael Rischitelli	Brisbane Lions	1
Dale Thomas	Collingwood	1

SELECTORS: Andrew Demetriou, Adrian Anderson, Rod Austin, Kevin Bartlett, Mark Bickley, Gerard Healy, Chris Mainwaring, Kevin Sheehan, Robert Walls.

2006 NAB AFL Rising Star Medal nominees

Rd 1	Marc Murphy	Carlton	Rd 12	Clinton Young	Hawthorn
Rd 2	Dale Thomas	Collingwood	Rd 13	Cheynee Stiller	Brisbane Lions
Rd 3	Danyle Pearce	Port Adelaide	Rd 14	Grant Birchall	Hawthorn
Rd 4	Andrew Raines	Richmond	Rd 15	Matthew Moody	Brisbane Lions
Rd 5	Heath Shaw	Collingwood	Rd 16	Troy Chaplin	Port Adelaide
Rd 6	Dean Polo	Richmond	Rd 17	Andrew Swallow	Kangaroos
Rd 7	Clint Bartram	Melbourne	Rd 18	Matthew Bate	Melbourne
Rd 8	Michael Rischitelli	Brisbane Lions	Rd 19	Nathan Foley	Richmond
Rd 9	Brad Symes	Port Adelaide	Rd 20	Nathan Jones	Melbourne
Rd 10	Matt Rosa	West Coast Eagles	Rd 21	Brad Moran	Kangaroos
Rd 11	Jacob Surjan	Port Adelaide	Rd 22	Mark LeCras	West Coast Eagles





NAB CUP

Geelong ended a 43-year premiership drought, and a run of nine losing Grand Finals, with a nail-biting NAB Cup victory.

When a club has waited 43 years to win some silverware, any trophy – no matter what it is – is worth celebrating. That's exactly what Geelong did after overcoming Adelaide by eight points at AAMI Stadium to take out the NAB Cup in March.

It was the Cats' first piece of silverware since they beat Hawthorn in 1963 to win the premiership. In between, there had been nine losing Grand Finals (including four pre-season) and plenty of agony for the club's long-suffering fans.

For much of the match against the hotly favoured Crows, it seemed Geelong would have to be the bridesmaid once again. The Cats kicked the first score of the match – a behind – but did not lead again until the third quarter.

Adelaide bagged four goals to Geelong's one in the opening term and, at one stage, the deficit was 29 points, with Matthew Bode and Ian Perrie doing most of the damage on the scoreboard.

However, the Cats clawed their way back into contention in the third quarter when Josh Hunt and Gary Ablett booted two nine-point goals in as many minutes.

The home team responded with some quick goals of its own from Bode, Perrie and Simon Goodwin before Bernie Vince booted a nine-pointer. The Crows held a 13-point advantage at the last change, but the Cats, led by an inspired Cameron Mooney, would not be denied.

He kicked two goals to get the comeback rolling, Shannon Byrnes added another, before Joel Corey bagged a giant nine-pointer to put the Cats two points in front. A third goal from Mooney just before the final siren put the result beyond doubt.

"It's just a great feeling for the boys," Mooney said after the match.

"It's a lot of pressure off the whole group."

It might not have been the cup that is awarded at the end of September, but you wouldn't have known it from the reaction of the Geelong fans, who came in their thousands to salute the victorious team at Skilled Stadium the next day.

Geelong's NAB Cup premiership team:

Jimmy Bartel, Mark Blake, Shannon Byrnes, Paul Chapman, Joel Corey, Matthew Egan, Corey Enright, Josh Hunt, David Johnson, Gary Ablett, Cameron Mooney, James Kelly, Cameron Ling, Tom Lonergan, Charlie Gardiner, Andrew Mackie, Darren Milburn, Henry Playfair, Brent Prismaill, Jarrad Rooke, Matthew Scarlett (capt), Will Slade, Matthew Spencer, Kane Tenace.

BELATED SILVERWARE: Geelong players celebrate the 2006 NAB Cup victory over Adelaide at AAMI Stadium, which ended a 43-year premiership drought for the Cats.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Cameron Mooney, with Andrew Mackie, helped seal the Cats' win.

2006 NAB Cup

Round 1

Brisbane Lions 1.8.13 (70) d Essendon 1.8.12 (69) at Carrara
Melbourne 0.9.15 (69) d Western Bulldogs 1.7.12 (63) at Marrara Oval
Kangaroos 1.8.11 (68) d Sydney Swans 0.5.7 (37) at Manuka Oval
Hawthorn 1.11.10 (85) d Richmond 0.11.9 (75) at Telstra Dome
Geelong 0.15.8 (98) d Carlton 1.8.13 (70) at Telstra Dome
Adelaide 2.16.13 (127) d Port Adelaide 0.8.7 (55) at AAMI Stadium
Collingwood 2.8.8 (74) d St Kilda 1.9.10 (73)* at Telstra Dome *Collingwood won in extra time
Fremantle 1.18.10 (127) d West Coast Eagles 1.7.14 (65) at Subiaco

Quarter-finals

Melbourne 0.13.12 (90) d Brisbane Lions 0.12.9 (81) at Telstra Dome
Adelaide 2.7.11 (71) d Hawthorn 1.7.7 (58) at Aurora Stadium
Geelong 1.10.17 (86) d Kangaroos 1.8.3 (60) at Cazaly Stadium
Fremantle 0.15.10 (100) d Collingwood 2.10.6 (84) at Subiaco

Semi-finals

Adelaide 1.16.21 (129) d Melbourne 1.5.5 (44) at AAMI Stadium
Geelong 3.10.14 (101) d Fremantle 1.10.12 (81) at Telstra Dome

Grand Final

Geelong	0.1.1	0.5.3	2.6.4	3.10.5 (92)
Adelaide	0.4.5	0.5.10	1.8.14	1.10.15 (84)

BEST: Geelong – Bartel, Mooney, Enright, Kelly, Corey, G. Ablett. Adelaide – Goodwin, Bode, Knights, Burton, Vince.

GOALS (nine points): Geelong – G. Ablett, Corey, Hunt. Adelaide – Vince.

GOALS (six points): Geelong – Mooney 3, Chapman 2, G. Ablett, Kelly, Rooke, Playfair, Byrnes. Adelaide – Bode 3, Perrie 2, Hentschel, Goodwin, Knights, Burton, Vince.

Umpires: Ellis, Ryan, Woodcock, McInerney

Attendance: 30,707 at AAMI Stadium

Michael Tuck Medal: Simon Goodwin (Adelaide)





COCA-COLA AFL ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

Grand Finalists, the West Coast Eagles and the Sydney Swans, led the way with four selections each in the 2006 All-Australian team.

The 2006 Coca-Cola All-Australian team was a mix of the old and new – the old being the 12 players who won selection in the AFL's team of the year for at least the second time; the new being the 10 first-timers in the side.

Leading the way with the sixth selection of his stellar career was West Coast Eagles midfielder Ben Cousins, who followed up his 2005 Brownlow Medal-winning season with another fine year. Of current players, only Robert Harvey, Mark Ricciuto and Nathan Buckley have been selected more times.

Brad Johnson, who led the Bulldogs so admirably in the absence of Luke Darcy and kicked 70 goals in the premiership season, was named All-Australian captain. It was the fifth time the small forward has won All-Australian honours. Sydney Swans forward Barry Hall was the vice-captain, the third straight year he has been chosen in the team.

Like his teammate Johnson, Scott West was named All-Australian for the fifth time. Adelaide duo Simon Goodwin and Andrew McLeod won a place in the team for the fourth time, as did Fremantle's powerhouse forward Matthew Pavlich.

Eagles pair Chris Judd and Dean Cox, St Kilda forward Nick Riewoldt, Tiger Joel Bowden and Sydney's Adam Goodes (who won his second Brownlow Medal weeks after the All-Australian announcement), all celebrated their second All-Australian selections.

Of the 10 new faces, Eagles defender Darren Glass led the way in the important full-back position. The other new players were Nathan Bassett (Adelaide), Lindsay Gilbee (Western Bulldogs), Craig Bolton

and Ryan O'Keefe (Sydney), Alan Didak (Collingwood), Brendan Fevola (Carlton), James McDonald (Melbourne) and Brendon Lade and Shaun Burgoyne (Port Adelaide).

Unsurprisingly, the 2006 Grand Finalists – the West Coast Eagles and the Sydney Swans – each had four players, the most among the 16 clubs.

Adelaide and the Western Bulldogs each had three All-Australian players. Only four players were included from teams that did not make the finals, and five teams – Geelong, the Brisbane Lions, Hawthorn, the Kangaroos and Essendon – did not have a representative.

West Coast's John Worsfold was named the All-Australian coach and Brett Allen was chosen as the All-Australian umpire for the fourth time.

Putting the talent on the list into perspective, the team included three Brownlow Medallists – Cousins, Judd and Goodes – two Norm Smith Medallists – Judd and dual winner McLeod – and a Coleman Medallist in Fevola. Also, there were three Rising Star Medal winners – Cousins, Goodes and Riewoldt.

Thirteen club best and fairest winners filled the team, with eight of them multiple winners.

BACK ROW: James McDonald, Ryan O'Keefe, Alan Didak, Brendon Lade, Craig Bolton, Nick Riewoldt, Shaun Burgoyne, Adam Goodes, Simon Goodwin.

FRONT ROW: Lindsay Gilbee, Scott West, Brad Johnson, Barry Hall, Brendan Fevola, Andrew McLeod.

ABSENT: Chris Judd, Ben Cousins, Darren Glass, Dean Cox, Matthew Pavlich, Nathan Bassett and Joel Bowden.

2006 AFL All-Australian team

B: Nathan Bassett (Adel), Darren Glass (WCE), Lindsay Gilbee (WB)

HB: Craig Bolton (Syd), Joel Bowden (Rich), Andrew McLeod (Adel)

C: Simon Goodwin (Adel), Scott West (WB), Adam Goodes (Syd)

HF: Alan Didak (Coll), Barry Hall (Syd), Ryan O'Keefe (Syd)

F: Brad Johnson (WB), Brendan Fevola (Carl), Nick Riewoldt (StK)

Foll: Brendon Lade (PA), Chris Judd (WCE), Ben Cousins (WCE)

IC: Shaun Burgoyne (PA), Dean Cox (WCE), James McDonald (Melb), Matthew Pavlich (Frem)

Captain: Brad Johnson **Vice-captain:** Barry Hall

Coach: John Worsfold **Umpire:** Brett Allen

Selectors: Rod Austin, Adrian Anderson, Kevin Bartlett, Gerard Healy, Neil Kerley, Chris Mainwaring, Robert Walls and Andrew Demetriou (non-voting chairman).





COCA-COLA INTERNATIONAL RULES SERIES

The Kevin Sheedy-coached Australia defeated the Irish on aggregate, capturing the International Rules Series for the second straight year.

Following the emphatic 2-0 triumph at home in 2005, Australia was always going to face a stiff challenge to back up its International Rules Series victory on Irish soil in 2006.

However, under the expert tutelage of coach Kevin Sheedy, the Aussies overcame a slow start and several controversies to snatch the series and edge to a 7-6 overall lead since the series was created.

The opening game at Galway's Pearse Stadium was a thriller, with the Irish looking sharp in the slippery conditions and jumping out to a 12-point lead at quarter-time. Sydney trio Barry Hall, Nick Davis and Ryan O'Keefe then clicked into gear up forward for the visitors, helping the side to a four-point break at the last change.

In a pressure-packed final stanza, the Australians clung to a one-point lead with only 90 seconds remaining. However, a wayward kick by Eagle Adam Selwood allowed Irishman Steven McDonnell to put the home team in front with an over, before local hero Joe Bergin sealed the win with a six-pointer in the dying seconds.

The Australians needed a nine-point victory in the second and final game at Croke Park to retain their crown. A torrid first quarter saw the visitors overrun the Irish with a mixture of skill and physicality.

Although Ireland closed to within six points at quarter-time, consecutive overs from Brendon Goddard, Chance Bateman and Aaron Davey stretched the lead to 11 points at the main break. The third quarter proved decisive, as Goddard slotted home a six-pointer and added to overs from Danyle Pearce, Justin Sherman and Nick Davis. Heading into the final term with an insurmountable 37-point lead, the Australians cruised home to record a resounding 69-31 victory and secure the series by an aggregate of 30 points.



SERIES WIN: Australia beat Ireland by 38 points in the second Test at Croke Park in Dublin to claim the International Rules Series.

2006 Coca-Cola International Rules Series (Ireland)

FIRST TEST AT PEARSE STADIUM, GALWAY

Ireland	0.5.1 (16)	0.6.3 (21)	0.8.5 (29)	1.12.6 (48)
Australia	0.1.1 (4)	0.4.2 (14)	1.8.3 (33)	1.9.7 (40)

Teams

Ireland: Kieran McGeeney (c), Alan Quirke, Paul Barden, Colm Begley, Joe Bergin, Alan Brogan, Sean Cavanagh, Ronan Clarke, Brendan Coulter, Kieran Donaghy, Dermott Earley, Kieran Fitzgerald, Paul Galvin, Graham Geraghty, Tom Kelly, Tadhg Kennelly, Karl Lacy, Sean Martin Lockhart, Steven McDonnell, Anthony Moyles, Nicholas Murphy, Aidan O'Mahoney, Marc O SE, Kevin Reilly, Shane Ryan.

Australia: Dustin Fletcher (c), Chance Bateman, Campbell Brown, Ryan Crowley, Aaron Davey, Nick Davis, Sam Fisher, Lindsay Gilbee, Brendon Goddard, Barry Hall, Graham Johncock, Matthew Lappin, James McDonald, Ryan O'Keefe, Danyle Pearce, Andrew Raines, Adam Schneider, Adam Selwood, Justin Sherman, Kade Simpson, Brent Stanton, Michael Voss.

Goals (6 points): Ireland – Bergin.

Australia – O'Keefe.

Overs (3 points): Ireland – McDonnell 4, Barden, Begley, Bergin, Brogan, Cavanagh, Earley, Geraghty, Kennelly.

Australia – O'Keefe 3, Davis 2, Hall 2, Davey, Lappin.

Best: Ireland – Kelly, McDonnell, Fitzgerald, Bergin, McGeeney, Brogan.

Australia – Lappin, O'Keefe, Fletcher, Sherman, Hall, Davis.

Umpires: Pat McEnaney (Ireland), Shane McNerney (Australia).

Crowd: 30,000 (approx)

SECOND TEST AT CROKE PARK, DUBLIN

Australia	1.3.1 (16)	1.6.3 (27)	3.11.6 (57)	3.15.6 (69)
Ireland	0.3.1 (10)	0.4.4 (16)	0.5.5 (20)	0.7.10 (31)

Teams

Ireland: Kieran McGeeney (c), Alan Quirke, Paul Barden, Colm Begley, Joe Bergin, Alan Brogan, Sean Cavanagh, Ronan Clarke, Brendan Coulter, Kieran Donaghy, Dermot Earley, Kieran Fitzgerald, Paul Galvin, Graham Geraghty, Tom Kelly, Tadhg Kennelly, Karl Lacy, Sean Martin Lockhart, Steven McDonnell, Anthony Moyles, Nicholas Murphy, Aidan O'Mahoney, Marc O SE, Kevin Reilly, Shane Ryan.

Australia: Barry Hall (c), Chance Bateman, Campbell Brown, Ryan Crowley, Aaron Davey, Nick Davis, Dustin Fletcher, Brendon Goddard, Barry Hall, Graham Johncock, Matthew Lappin, James McDonald, David Mundy, Ryan O'Keefe, Brett Peake, Danyle Pearce, Andrew Raines, Adam Schneider, Adam Selwood, Justin Sherman, Kade Simpson, Brent Stanton, Michael Voss.

Goals (6 points): Australia – Crowley, Goddard, Stanton.

Ireland – Nil.

Overs (3 points): Australia – Hall 4, Sherman 3, O'Keefe 2, Pearce 2, Bateman, Davey, Davis, Goddard.

Ireland – Brogan 2, Earley 2, McDonnell 2, Coulter.

Best: Australia – Pearce, Sherman, O'Keefe, Hall, Fletcher, Davey.

Ireland – Kelly, Lockhart, Cavanagh, Moyles, Coulter, McDonnell.

Umpires: David Coldrick (Ireland), Shane McNerney (Australia).

Crowd: 82,127

Jim Stynes Medal: Ryan O'Keefe

Australia won the series.



AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Eight new members were inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2006, with St Kilda's 1966 premiership captain Darrel Baldock elevated to Legend status.

Darrel Baldock, the man who captained St Kilda to its only premiership in 1966, was made a Legend of the Australian Football Hall of Fame on June 22. The new inductees were former players Craig Bradley, Tony Lockett, Steve Marsh, Peter Matera, John Murphy, Wilfred Smallhorn and Robert Walls (also a premiership coach), and former umpire Harry Beitzel.

The Australian Football Hall of Fame was established in 1996 and serves to recognise players, coaches, umpires, administrators and media representatives who have made an outstanding contribution to Australian Football – at any level – since the game's inception in 1858.

Players are eligible only after they have retired from the game for at least three years. Coaches, umpires, administrators and media representatives must also be retired.



EXCELLENT SERVICE: The 2006 Australian Football Hall of Fame inductees (from top left): Harry Beitzel, Craig Bradley, Robert Walls, Peter Matera; (bottom left): Steve Marsh, Tony Lockett, Darrel Baldock and John Murphy.



HARRY BEITZEL

Born: April 6, 1927

After playing a handful of games for the Fitzroy reserves, Beitzel began his career as a VFL umpire in 1948. Nicknamed 'The Big H', he umpired 153 games, including the 1955 Grand Final between Melbourne and Collingwood, before retiring in 1960. It was then that his career as a football broadcaster took off. Beitzel joined the 3KZ broadcasting team in 1961, staying there until he moved to 3AW in 1972, where he became the voice of football for nearly two decades. He made an enormous contribution to football and pioneered the concept of international matches against Ireland in the 1960s, leading tours of Australian teams nicknamed the Galahs.



CRAIG BRADLEY

Born: October 23, 1963

Bradley began his career in the SANFL with Port Adelaide in 1981, playing 98 games for the Magpies before moving to Carlton for the 1986 season. A brilliant midfielder with wonderful skills and phenomenal durability, he played 375 games for the Blues before retiring at the end of 2002. Club captain from 1998-2001, Bradley was a key member of the 1987 and 1995 Carlton premiership sides, won three best and fairest awards, and was named All-Australian eight times. In all, including 19 matches for South Australia and nine International Rules Series appearances for his country, he played 501 games over 22 seasons.



TONY LOCKETT

Born: March 9, 1966

The most prolific goalkicker in VFL/AFL history, Lockett made his debut for St Kilda in 1983. In 12 seasons and 183 games with the Saints, the powerful, strong-marking forward kicked 898 goals, and won two best and fairest awards, as well as the Brownlow Medal in 1987. Lockett moved to Sydney in 1995 and enjoyed instant success, taking out the club champion award in his first year. In 1999, he broke Collingwood legend Gordon Coventry's VFL/AFL record of 1299 goals and, in all, kicked 462 majors for the Swans, taking his overall tally to 1360 goals in 281 games. Lockett was named All-Australian six times.

**STEVE MARSH****Born:** September 12, 1924

One of the best rovers Western Australia has produced, Marsh started a stellar career with South Fremantle in 1945.

Two years later, he played in a premiership side – one of six flags he would win with the Bulldogs. A nimble rover with wonderful skills, Marsh won four best and fairest awards and, in 1952, snared the Sandover Medal, the WAFL's highest individual honour. After 226 games for the Bulldogs, he moved to bitter rival East Fremantle, where he was captain-coach for two seasons, guiding the team to the 1957 flag. Marsh played 265 WAFL games, as well as 19 games for Western Australia, and was named in the inaugural All-Australian side in 1953.

**PETER MATERA****Born:** April 3, 1969

One of the West Coast Eagles' most decorated players, Matera made his debut in 1990 and went on to play 253 games

over 13 seasons. The speedy wingman will always be remembered for his best on ground performance in the 1992 Grand Final when he kicked five goals, and won the Norm Smith Medal in the Eagles' first premiership. He also played in the club's 1994 flag. A five-time All-Australian, Matera won the Eagles' best and fairest award in 1997 and twice finished runner-up in the Brownlow Medal. In 2005, he was named on a wing in the Qantas Australian Football Indigenous Team of the Century. Though he made his name on the wing, a move later in his career to half-back saw opposing coaches put a tagger on him to draw him further into defence and stifle his blistering attacks.

**JOHN MURPHY****Born:** November 20, 1949

A wonderfully balanced footballer with exceptional skills, Murphy made his debut with Fitzroy in 1967. The classy centreman played 214 games, won five best and fairest

awards with the Lions and captained the club from 1973-77. He joined South Melbourne in 1978, winning the best and fairest in his first season, before moving to North Melbourne in 1979. An 11-time Victoria representative, Murphy retired in 1980. In his 246-game career, he played just one final – for the Roos in 1979. His father Leo Murphy played 132 games for Hawthorn, and his son Marc played his first season with Carlton in 2006.

**WILFRED SMALLHORN****Born:** February 25, 1911**Died:** November 27, 1988

Known as 'Chicken' throughout his 150-game career with

Fitzroy, Smallhorn made his debut for the Lions in 1930. A classy, pacy wingman with an uncanny knack of winning the ball, he stood just 173cm tall and weighed 65kg. Smallhorn wrote his name into the record books in 1933 when he won the Brownlow Medal – one of five times that he finished in the top 10 of Brownlow voting. The talented Lion also played seven games for Victoria, but his football career was cut short when he enlisted in the army in 1940 for World War II.

**ROBERT WALLS****Born:** July 21, 1950

After joining Carlton as a 16-year-old in 1967, Walls made his debut that same year in the first of 12 seasons at the club. A strong-marking centre half-forward, he played in the Blues' 1968, 1970 and 1972 premiership sides. Walls played 218 games and kicked 367 goals for Carlton, and captained the club in 1977-78, before playing two seasons with Fitzroy. After retiring in 1980, he took over the Lions' coaching job in 1981, and later coached Brisbane and Richmond, but his most famous hour was when he guided the Blues to the 1987 flag. He was named on the interchange bench in Carlton's Team of the Century. Walls is now a popular commentator for Network Ten and 3AW and a columnist for *The Age*.



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LEGEND – DARREL BALDOCK**Born:** September 29, 1938

Darrel Baldock was football's most wanted man before he joined St Kilda in 1962. After making his debut for Tasmania at just 18, and some blistering performances for Latrobe, he was regarded as the finest footballer outside the then VFL. Baldock originally signed with Melbourne, then South Melbourne, but when the Swans' hold on him expired, the Saints swooped. A centre half-forward with tremendous courage and durability, he quickly established himself as a firm favourite at Moorabbin, no doubt helped by his wonderful skills when the ball hit the ground. In only his second season with the club, Baldock was named St Kilda captain, a position he held until his retirement as a VFL footballer in 1968. Known as 'The Doc', he played 119 games for the club, kicked 237 goals, won three best and fairest awards and topped the Saints' goalkicking four times, but his greatest triumph came in 1966 when he led the club to a famous one-point Grand Final win over Collingwood. After leaving St Kilda, Baldock returned to play six more seasons for Latrobe before finishing his career with New Norfolk in 1975. He played 10 games for Victoria, 15 games for Tasmania, was named All-Australian in 1961 and 1966, and was chosen as captain of both the St Kilda and Tasmanian teams of the century.

AFL LIFE MEMBERS

Nine new AFL Life Members are to join the elite few who have provided great service to Australian Football.

After the 2006 season, nine new AFL Life Members are to be honoured. They include four current players, two retired players, two leading officials and one umpire. The group has collectively won three Brownlow Medals and two Coleman Medals.

Players and field umpires automatically qualify for Life Membership having reached 300 senior games, including premiership season matches, finals, International Rules, State of Origin and pre-season games. A sub-committee consisting of AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou, former AFL Commission Chairman John Kennedy and *Herald Sun* senior football journalist Mike Sheahan considers nominations for Life Membership and the Jack Titus Award, making recommendations to the AFL Commission.



NATHAN BUCKLEY

Brownlow Medal, Norm Smith Medal, Magarey Medal, Rising Star Medal, six-time Copeland Trophy winner, seven-time All-Australian... there's not many individual honours Collingwood captain Nathan Buckley hasn't won. Having won a premiership with Port Adelaide Magpies in the SANFL, Buckley spent a year with the Brisbane Bears before joining Collingwood in 1994. His ability to win the ball in the middle has put him at the centre of Collingwood's game plan, and opposition planning. A born leader, he has twice led Australia against Ireland in the International Rules Series, which he quickly adapted to with devastating effect.



RICHARD COLLESS

Sydney Swans Chairman Richard Colless is the longest serving club president in the AFL. His involvement in senior football administration began in 1984 when he was appointed to the inaugural independent Board of West Australian Football, which was the forerunner to the West Australian Football Commission. In 1986, he played a leading role in negotiations with the VFL for a team from Western Australia to enter the competition. He was the first Chairman of the West Coast Eagles in 1987 when they debuted in the VFL. In 1993, having moved to Sydney, he joined the board of the Sydney Swans, and in 1994 was appointed Chairman. He was also Chairman of the AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission from 1998-2002. From 1965-1981, he was involved in amateur football with the University of Western Australia as a player, coach and administrator.



SHANE CRAWFORD

Shane Crawford's pace and skill helped earn him a Brownlow Medal in 1999 – his debut year as Hawthorn captain, when he also led the Hawks to the pre-season premiership. A self-confessed fitness fanatic, Crawford's speed and endurance has worn down many an opponent

trying to negate his electrifying runs out of the middle. Crawford's speed makes him ideal for the International Rules hybrid game and he has twice captained Australia against Ireland. Having stepped away from the captaincy at the end of 2004, he remains a central figure at Hawthorn.



RON EVANS

More recently known for his role as Chairman of the AFL Commission, Ron Evans first made his name in football as a star full-forward at Essendon, winning the Coleman Medal in 1959 and 1960. He was also the WAFL's leading goalkicker in 1963 when he transferred to West Perth. He also represented Victoria in five matches. Evans was President of Essendon from 1988-92 before joining the Commission, becoming Chairman in 1998. In his time at the helm of the AFL, revenue has more than doubled and the AFL has struck Australia's largest broadcast rights deal, a \$780 million agreement with the Seven and Ten networks and Foxtel.



BRAD JOHNSON

The man with the biggest smile in football was made Western Bulldogs captain after the 2006 season, following two successful years as acting skipper in Luke Darcy's absence. The affable forward's 2006 season culminated in his fifth All-Australian selection, and he was also named captain of the elite squad. Johnson was the Dogs' leading goalkicker and won a third best and fairest award. He has represented Australia in the International Rules Series on six occasions. Capable of kicking freakish goals and a consummate team man, his positive spirit while representing Victoria won him plaudits from then-state coach Robert Walls for the inspiration he brought to the team.



SCOTT McLAREN

Recruited from the Eastern Football League in Victoria, Scott McLaren umpired the 1993 AFL reserves Grand Final and officiated his first AFL match in 1994. McLaren has umpired 24 finals, including the 1999, 2001 and 2005 Grand Finals. His effectiveness with the whistle saw him named All-Australian umpire in 2001. McLaren also umpired two International Rules Series matches in Ireland in 2002. In 2003, McLaren became only the second umpire in the history of the AFL to officiate in more than 100 consecutive games, breaking Jack Elder's 89-year record. That McLaren has managed to umpire so consistently for such an extended period is testament to not only his decision-making, but also his fitness and work ethic.

**KEVIN NEALE**

Kevin Neale has had a significant involvement in football over 42 years since his debut for St Kilda in 1965.

He played 256 games for the Saints, including a premiership, and was vice-captain from 1975-77. He then became playing coach for Ainslie in the ACT and won four premierships, including two undefeated seasons. Neale was named in the ACT Legends team and was inducted into the AFL Canberra Hall of Fame in 2006. He also coached Central District in the SANFL and the NSW representative team. A former chairman of selectors at St Kilda, he now manages the coterie groups and is President of the Past Players and Officials Association.

**DAVID NEITZ**

Captain of Melbourne since 2000, David Neitz became the Demons' games record holder and all-time leading goalkicker.

A strong leader, Neitz is on path to become the first Demon to play 300 premiership games in 2007. Having begun his career as a formidable centre half-back, and earning praise from Wayne Carey as one of the best defenders in the competition, he was eventually moved to full-forward, now his home. In 2002, he won the Coleman Medal and the club's best and fairest award. He is a two-time All-Australian and represented Australia in two International Rules Series, as well as twice donning the Big V for Victoria in State of Origin matches.

**MICHAEL VOSS**

One of the toughest and most talented players to have played AFL, Michael Voss captained one of the greatest teams of the modern era to three consecutive

premierships from four successive Grand Finals. Stamping his mark on the AFL at a young age, he won a Brownlow Medal at just 21. Voss won five best and fairest awards, was named All-Australian five times and was selected All-Australian captain twice. Having battled knee problems towards the end of his career, Voss still won a place in the 2006 Australian side that toured Ireland for the International Rules Series. Universally admired, Voss retired after last season avoiding the fanfare he so richly deserved.

2006 JACK TITUS AWARD

Bill Sutherland

The head trainer at West Coast Eagles since their inception, Bill Sutherland (right) has not missed any of the club's 474 premiership season matches. He was head trainer of the Central Wheatbelt Association from 1964-75. He was also a trainer at Claremont from 1978-86. Sutherland also travelled with the Australian International Rules Series team to Ireland in 2004 and was a trainer for the home series in 2005. His efforts have won him life memberships with West Coast, the WAFL Trainers' Association and Central Wheatbelt Association.

Jack Titus Award recipients

2005	Brian Le Brocq	AFL	1995	Greg Sewell	Ess	1985	Ian Ridley	Melb
2004	Brian Coleman	Haw	1994	Bill McMaster	Geel	1984	Newton Chandler	Carl
2003	Tony Jewell	Rich	1993	Keith McKenzie	Carl/NMelb	1983	Graeme Richmond	Rich
2002	Con Regan	Frem	1992	Allan Cooke	Rich	1982	Roy McConnell	Rich
2001	Wes Loftis	Carl	1991	Ron Richards	Coll	1981	Ian Drake	St Kilda
2000	Andy Angwin	Haw	1990	John Dugdale	N Melb	1980	Max Elmer	Haw
1999	Laurie Dwyer	N Melb	1989	Bruce Comben	Carl	1979	Jim Cardwell	Melb
1998	Ken Goddard	Haw	1988	Sef Dunn	Haw	1978	Jack Adams	N Melb
1997	Bill Stephen	Fitz/Ess	1987	George Coates	Fitz	1978	Bill Cookson	Ess
1996	Rick Quade	Syd	1986	Jim Hannan	N Melb	1977	Jack Titus	Rich

The late Jack Titus was a champion Richmond forward who kicked 970 goals from 1926 to 1943. He played 294 games and for many years held the consecutive games record with 204. Titus was also a committeeman and senior coach at Richmond. The award is presented annually in recognition of outstanding service to football.



RETIREEES

The Brisbane Lions' triple premiership captain Michael Voss headlined the list of players who retired from the game in 2006.

A triple-premiership captain, a Brownlow Medallist who won flags with two teams, a 10-time club leading goalkicker, and one of the last survivors of Fitzroy were some of the notable players who retired in 2006.

Of all the players who have lit up the game since the VFL became the AFL in 1990, few, if any, have been held in such high regard as Michael Voss.

The highly decorated Brisbane Lions' captain, who hung up his boots at the end of the 2006 season, led his club to three consecutive premierships starting in 2001, won the Brownlow Medal in 1996, and did untold work for the game in Queensland.

Gavin Wanganeen was another Brownlow Medallist who departed the game last season. The winner of the game's highest individual honour in 1993, Wanganeen celebrated a flag with both Essendon and Port Adelaide in an illustrious career. He played his 300th and last AFL game in round one of the 2006 season.

Three other 300-game players also retired – Bulldog Rohan Smith, Adelaide's Ben Hart and ex-Magpie and Swan Paul Williams.

After 257 games with Collingwood and the Kangaroos, Saverio

Rocca called time on his AFL career to try his luck as a punter in the NFL in the United States.

The giant forward will be remembered as one of the game's highest goalkickers, booting 748 majors for 12th place on the all-time goalkicking list.

He led the Pies' goalkicking for seven straight years and was the Roos' leading goalkicker three times.

Other notable names who bade farewell to the game in 2006 included John Barker, a member of Fitzroy's final team who moved to the Brisbane Lions before enjoying a successful spell with Hawthorn, and Drew Banfield, a dual premiership player for West Coast.

Of the retirees who played 100 games or more, 12 were premiership players, while the star-studded Brisbane Lions' quartet of Clark Keating, Justin Leppitsch, Brad Scott and Voss won 11 flags between them.

Other retirees weren't so lucky when it came to premiership success, in particular, Peter Riccardi, who played 288 games for Geelong and was a member of the Cats' losing Grand Final sides in 1992, 1994 and 1995.



Departing players (more than 100 games)

Player	Team	Games	Goals
Drew Banfield	West Coast Eagles	265	76
John Barker	Fitzroy/Brisbane Lions/Hawthorn	168	127
Matthew Bishop	Melbourne/Port Adelaide	150	8
Blake Caracella	Essendon/Brisbane Lions/Collingwood	187	218
Mark Chaffey	Richmond	166	34
Stuart Dew	Port Adelaide	180	245
Josh Francou	Port Adelaide	156	72
Barnaby French	Port Adelaide/Carlton	133	40
Ben Hart	Adelaide	311	45
Clark Keating	Brisbane Lions	139	83
Andrew Kellaway	Richmond	172	30
Adam Kingsley	Port Adelaide	170	47
Justin Leppitsch	Brisbane Lions	227	194
Troy Makepeace	Kangaroos	139	37
*Phillip Matera	West Coast Eagles	179	389
Chad Morrison	West Coast Eagles/Collingwood	169	88
Alistair Nicholson	Melbourne	110	3
Justin Peckett	St Kilda	252	50
Stephen Powell	Western Bulldogs/Melbourne/St Kilda	142	94
Jade Rawlings	Hawthorn/Western Bulldogs/Kangaroos	148	96
Phillip Read	West Coast Eagles/Melbourne	108	32
Peter Riccardi	Geelong	288	286
Dean Rioli	Essendon	100	91
Saverio Rocca	Collingwood/Kangaroos	257	748
Jarrad Schofield	West Coast Eagles/Port Adelaide/Fremantle	206	127
Brad Scott	Hawthorn/Brisbane Lions	168	45
Rohan Smith	Western Bulldogs	300	254
Greg Stafford	Sydney Swans/Richmond	204	141
Michael Voss	Brisbane Lions	289	245
Peter Walsh	Melbourne/Port Adelaide	139	37
Gavin Wanganeen	Essendon/Port Adelaide	300	202
Paul Williams	Collingwood/Sydney Swans	306	307

* Retired before the start of the 2006 season.



Drew Banfield



John Barker



Matthew Bishop



Blake Caracella



Mark Chaffey



Stuart Dew



Josh Francou



Barnaby French



Ben Hart



Clark Keating



Andrew Kellaway



Adam Kingsley



Justin Leppitsch



Troy Makepeace



Phillip Matera



Chad Morrison



Alistair Nicholson



Justin Peckett



Stephen Powell



Jade Rawlings



Phillip Read



Peter Riccardi



Dean Rioli



Saverio Rocca



Jarrad Schofield



Brad Scott



Rohan Smith



Greg Stafford



Michael Voss



Peter Walsh



Gavin Wanganeen



Paul Williams

LOYAL TO THE END: Western Bulldogs stalwart Rohan Smith, revered by supporters, hung up his boots at the end of the season after 300 games.

OBITUARIES

Former club captains, a Member of Parliament, presidents, a founder of a star family dynasty, and Hall of Fame members all sadly passed away in 2006.

Len Ablett

Len Ablett, who was the oldest living member of Richmond's 1943 premiership team, died in December 2006, aged 90. The late Jack Dyer was the captain-coach of the 1943 side that beat Essendon, led by captain-coach Dick Reynolds.

Ablett was a foundation stone of the Ablett football dynasty. He was a cousin of the father of AFL players Gary Ablett snr, Geoff Ablett and Kevin Ablett. Gary's two sons Gary jnr and Nathan are both Geelong players and Kevin's son Luke plays for Sydney.

Len Ablett played 70 games with Richmond from 1939-43. The majority of his football life was at Myrtleford in north-east Victoria. He played 45 games with Myrtleford Wanderers (1932, 1945-46) and 220 games with Myrtleford (1933-38, 1947-53) and at both clubs was involved in premierships as captain-coach. He also had a pavilion at the ground named in his honour.

Owen Abrahams

Classy Fitzroy forward Owen Abrahams died, aged 72, after a long illness, on January 31, 2006. Abraham played from 1954-62. He was a rangy, dangerous half-forward and centre half-forward who played 132 games and kicked 232 goals. He won the club goalkicking in 1957 and 1961 and took over the captaincy in 1962 when Len Smith was the coach.

Recruited from the Commonwealth Bank club, Abrahams represented Victoria on nine occasions and, with Kevin Murray, became the first Fitzroy player to win All-Australian selection in 1958. During his time at Fitzroy, the club reached the finals in 1958 and 1960, but never a Grand Final. He is remembered for many superb performances, including the 1958 first semi-final when Fitzroy lost by four points. In Fitzroy's Team of the Century, Abrahams was selected on a half-forward flank, making up that line with Bernie Quinlan and Garry Wilson. After retiring, Abrahams became treasurer of Fitzroy.

Billy Deans

Billy Deans, a top-line defender in Melbourne's 1948 premiership team, died on August 7, 2006, aged 83.

He was renowned as a tough backman over 151 games from 1942-50. He also played one game with South Melbourne in 1941. Deans played in the team that drew with Essendon in the 1948 Grand Final, and in the replay the following week, which Melbourne won by 39 points. He also played in the losing 1946 Grand Final.

After retiring, Deans gave the Demons excellent service as a talent scout and in 1970 was made a Life Member of the club. An obituary notice from Melbourne and the club's Past and Present Players and Officials Association, said: "A true friend of the club and a valued member of the past players fraternity."

George Doig

Champion West Australian goalkicker George Doig died in late November 2006, aged 93. The former East Fremantle star played 202 games and kicked 1103 goals, including nine in his first game in 1933. He finished that season with 106 to become the first player in the WAFL to kick 100 in a season. He kicked a century in nine consecutive seasons from 1933-41, was club captain in 1940-41 and a premiership player in 1933, 1937 and 1945, when he returned, at the request of the club committee, to play six games.

Doig averaged 120 goals a season, or 5.46 a game. He was never goalless in a game. Doig played 14 games for Western Australia and kicked 62 goals. He was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2002, was picked in the West Australian Institute of Sport's Hall of Champions in 1988 and in 2004 was selected as a member and inaugural Legend of the WAFL's Hall of Fame and picked in the East Fremantle Team of the Century.

The Fremantle Dockers recognised Doig by naming their best and fairest award after him.

Arthur Edwards

Arthur Edwards, who died on May 18, 2006, aged 71, was a member of Footscray's only premiership side in 1954. Edwards played 120 games in a senior career that started in 1951 and ended in 1960. He played his first game just after his 17th birthday.

Edwards was part of a family steeped in football history at Footscray. He was the son-in-law of Frank 'Dolly' Aked, a revered father figure at the club who played 108 games from 1925-32 and later served as a trainer. Edwards' son, Allan Edwards, also played 12 games for Footscray after 66 with Richmond and 35 with Collingwood.

Edwards was a Maidstone boy who went to school at Rosamond State and Sunshine Technical schools. In football he worked his way up from the Footscray Fifts, a junior training group that played on the flats beside the Maribyrnong River.

In 1951, Edwards became the first player in Footscray's history to have played at all levels (fifts to seniors). He later coached the reserves and was a senior selector, at times chairman of selectors.

Les Foote

Les Foote, who died aged 81 on April 11, 2006, was the first of North Melbourne's glamour players and captained the club in its first VFL Grand Final in 1950, which it lost to Essendon. He played in the days when North (now the Kangaroos) was affectionately known as the Shinboners in the 1940s-50s.

Foote played 134 games and kicked 105 goals for North from 1941-51, was captain from 1948-51 and club champion in 1945

and 1949-50. He left North to captain-coach Berrigan in NSW but returned to the VFL to captain-coach St Kilda in 1954-55. He played 33 games for the Saints and won their club champion award in 1954.

Foote was a brilliant centreman, a master of the blind turn and he played 10 games for Victoria in 1946-47 and 1949-50-51.

As a youngster, he played in the Victorian Schoolboys' carnival side, moving on to North's colts and reserves teams before joining the senior side.

He also served in the RAAF in 1943-44 and played in the Air Force side. After St Kilda, Foote coached Maffra and Preston and in 1967 he coached North's reserves to the premiership. He then coached for a time in Brisbane.

Foote was named in the centre in North's Team of the Century and is a member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

Harry Meese

Fitzroy stalwart Harry Meese died on December 14, 2006, aged 84. His long association with Fitzroy over several decades saw him fill roles as social secretary (1950-62), club secretary (1965-67), committeeman (1958-70) and club delegate to the VFL (1966-70). He was synonymous with Fitzroy and he fought hard for everything that was maroon and blue, often in times when the club battled financial hardship. He was made a Life Member of Fitzroy in 1963 and later, when Fitzroy merged with the Brisbane Bears at the end of 1996, he was afforded the same standing with the Queensland club.

Meese was also inducted into the Fitzroy-Brisbane Hall of Fame in 2002. Fitzroy was hit heavily after the 1964 season when its captain-coach and great player Kevin Murray left to play for East Perth (1965-66). Meese was instrumental in getting Murray back to Fitzroy in 1967 where he continued his career as captain.

Travis Payze

Travis Payze died on September 1, 2006, aged 60. He played 127 games for St Kilda and kicked 73 goals from 1966-74, but his list of credits is much deeper. Payze, recruited from Frankston as a full-forward, made his debut in the second semi-final of 1966 and two weeks later played in St Kilda's only premiership side, beating Collingwood.

He struggled in seasons 1967 and 1968, but found his niche as a ruck-rover. In 1972 he was named an All-Australian. Payze was also a member of St Kilda's 1971 Grand Final side that lost to Hawthorn.

When Payze retired as a League player, he coached Dandenong in the VFA, but later returned to St Kilda, became chairman of selectors and served as club President for seven years until 1993. Payze, known as 'Bongo', had battled cancer for many years.

Terry Smith

Terry Smith, a member of Richmond's last premiership side in 1980, died of cancer, aged 47, on September 19, 2006. At the end, his friends, who included former teammate Jim Jess, surrounded him. Smith, a defender, played 100 VFL games – 56 with Richmond (1980-82 and 1986) and 44 with St Kilda (1983-85). About a month before his death, 17 of his 20 teammates from the 1980 premiership

side were among those to honour him at a function at a South Melbourne hotel. Former St Kilda players and 1980s opponents, including David Rhys-Jones and Denis Banks, were also there.

Smith was recruited from Tyntynder, in country Victoria, and became a strong backman.

Bryce Thomas

Bryce Thomas, a well-known 'back-room' face during football and cricket at the MCG, died of cancer at the Knox Private Hospital on April 17, 2006, aged 76. Thomas was assistant secretary of the Melbourne Cricket Club from 1978-93.

Thomas is also remembered as a top amateur footballer and he played in an Australian Football exhibition/demonstration match staged at the MCG during the 1956 Olympic Games.

Thomas had a passion for the stadium, knew it inside out, and after retirement from his administrative desk, became an MCG guide and also worked on special tasks as a consultant.

Neil Trezise, AM

Neil 'Nipper' Trezise, the top-line roving partner of Peter Pianto in Geelong's golden era of the early 1950s, died aged 75 on August 20, 2006, following a heart attack. Trezise is also remembered as a long-serving member of the Victorian Labor Party. He was Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation (1982-85) and Shadow Minister, when in opposition, in 1974-82. He was also Shadow Minister for Transport (1970-74) and Shadow Minister for Tourism (1977-80).

Trezise was a Cat from 1949-59, playing 185 games and kicking 272 goals. He played in the 1951-52 premierships. He also played in the losing 1953 Grand Final.

He was recruited from Victorian country club Redan and rose to become Geelong captain in 1959. He also had a stint as playing coach of Geelong reserves (1960-61) and non-playing coach (1962-64). In 1960, he won the Gardiner Medal as the best and fairest player in the VFL reserves. Trezise also served as president of Geelong in 1974-75.

Clinton Wines

Clinton Wines, who died on October 23, 2006, aged 84, didn't have a long career at Carlton, but over two seasons he made his mark as a brilliant player. The highlight was playing in the infamous 1945 'Bloodbath' Grand Final against South Melbourne, won by Carlton 15.13 (103) to 10.15 (75). The game was played at Princes Park (while the MCG was occupied by the US Air Force during World War II). Wines starred in the centre.

Wines played only 39 games for the Blues. Ken Hands, a teammate in the 1945 premiership side, remembers him as a top-class midfielder. "He was strong and direct and a good kick and mark," Hands said.

In 2003, Wines, who was living in NSW when he died, was made a Life Member of Carlton, an honour awarded to all the club's premiership players. Wines' death left only five survivors from the victorious 1945 premiership team: Hands, Jim Clark, Jim Mooring, Doug Williams and Alec Way.



CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES

OCTOBER 31, 2006

Western Bulldogs star Brad Johnson filled in for injured skipper Luke Darcy, ending a super season with 74 goals and captaincy of the All-Australian team.

DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors present their report together with the financial report of the Australian Football League ('the Company') and consolidated entity, being the Company and its controlled entities, for the year ended October 31, 2006, and the auditor's report thereon.

Directors

The Directors of the Company at any time during or since the end of the financial year are:

Mr R B Evans, AM

Chairman – Appointed Commissioner 1993, Chairman 1998; Member of Audit and Remuneration Committees

Qualifications: Bachelor of Science (Melbourne University), Master of Business Administration (Monash University)

Experience: Director, Spotless Group Limited; Director, Healthscope Limited; Player, Essendon Football Club 1958-62; President, Essendon Football Club 1988-92.

Mr A Demetriou

Chief Executive Officer – Appointed 2003

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (LaTrobe University), Diploma of Education (LaTrobe University)

Experience: Player, North Melbourne (Kangaroos) Football Club 1981-87; Player, Hawthorn Football Club 1988; Former Managing Director and Chairman Ruthinium Group, now Board Member; Chief Executive Officer, AFL Players' Association 1998-2000; Non-Executive Chairman, Baxter Group; Board Member, Robert Rose Foundation; Public Appeal Chairman, Olivia Newton John Cancer Centre; Director, AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission.

Mr C B Carter, OAM

Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 1993, Member of the Audit Committee

Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce (Melbourne University), Master of Business Administration (Harvard University)

Experience: Former Director, Geelong Football Club and Geelong representative on AFL Board 1987-1993; Director, Origin Energy Ltd; Director, Wesfarmers Ltd; Director, Commonwealth Games Melbourne 2006 Pty Ltd; Director, SEEK Ltd; Chairman, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships; Director, Cape York Institute; Senior Advisor, The Boston Consulting Group.

Mr M C Fitzpatrick

Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 2003; Member of the Audit Committee

Qualifications: Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) (University of Western Australia), Bachelor of Arts (Hons) (Oxford University, UK)

Experience: Chairman, Victorian Funds Management Corporation; Director, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; Chairman, Treasury Group Limited; Director, Rio Tinto Limited;

Director, Rio Tinto plc; Player, Carlton Football Club 1975-83; Director, Carlton Football Club 1989-95; Chairman, Australian Sports Commission 1995-98.

Mr R A Hammond, AM

Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 2001; Member of Remuneration Committee

Experience: Former Managing Director, Rail Road Recyclers of Australia Pty Ltd; Player, North Adelaide Football Club and Norwood Football Club 1960-1975; Coach, Norwood Football Club 1974-79; Coach, Sydney Swans Football Club 1984; Chairman, Adelaide Football Club 1991-2000; Managing Director, Rail Road Services Pty Ltd; Director, Festival City Broadcasters Pty Ltd; Director, Nova 919 Pty Ltd; Chairman, Churchill Warehouse Pty Ltd; Former Chairman, Half Case Warehouse Group, SA.

Mr G T John, AO

Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 2000

Qualifications: Fellow of Chartered Institute of Transport

Experience: Managing Director, Australia Post 1993-present; Member, Committee for Melbourne; Member, Business Council of Australia; Member, Australian Institute of Company Directors; Councillor, Australian Business Arts Foundation; Director and Alternate Chairman, Australian Air Express; Director and Alternate Chairman, Startrack Express Holdings Pty Ltd; Former Trustee, Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust; Player, East Perth Football Club 1959-63; Player, South Melbourne Football Club 1964-69; All-Australian 1966; Coach, South Melbourne Football Club 1973-75; President, South Melbourne Football Club 1978-80.

Mr W J Kely

Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 1998

Qualifications: Bachelor of Economics (LaTrobe University)

Experience: Director, Linfox Group; Director, Hotel Leisure & Tourism Trust of Australia; Director, Bank of Queensland; Chair, Virtual Communities Pty Ltd; Chairman, AFL SportsReady Limited; Member, AFLPA Education and Training Board; Member, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal; Member, Australians for Just Refugee Program; Trustee, Linfox Classic Car Collection; Chair, Ethical Clothing Trades Council of Victoria; Former Director, Australian Retirement Fund; Former Secretary, ACTU; Former Director, Reserve Bank of Australia; Former Chairman, Commonwealth Government Regional Development Taskforce; Former Member, National Employment and Training Taskforce; Former Director, Superannuation Trust of Australia.

Mr C D Langford**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 1999**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Architecture (Melbourne University)**Experience:** Director, Spyglass Property Pty Ltd; Director, Babcock and Brown Residential Land Partners; Director, NSW Cultural Management; Former CEO Retail Projects, Mirvac Group; Player, Hawthorn Football Club 1980-97; Former Member, AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission 1998-2004.**Ms S J Mostyn****Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 2005**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Arts, Australian University, Bachelor of Law, Australian University**Experience:** Group Executive Culture and Reputation, Insurance Australia Group Limited; Governor, Centenary Institute; Director, Sydney Festival; Director, Sydney Theatre Company; Director, Redfern Waterloo Authority; Trustee, Australia Museum.**Directors' Meetings**

The number of Directors' meetings (including meetings of Committees of Directors) and number of meetings attended by each of the Directors of the Company during the financial year were:

Director	Directors' meetings		Audit Committee meetings		Remuneration Committee meetings	
	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held*	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held*	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held*
Mr R B Evans	9	11	1	2	1	2
Mr A Demetriou	11	11				
Mr C B Carter	9	11	2	2		
Mr M C Fitzpatrick	10	11	2	2		
Mr R A Hammond	11	11			2	2
Mr G T John	11	11				
Mr W J Kelly	11	11				
Mr C D Langford	11	11				
Ms S J Mostyn	10	11				

The role of the Audit Committee is to give the Board of Directors additional assurance regarding the quality and reliability of financial information prepared for use by the Board in determining policies or determining items for inclusion in the financial statements.

The role of the Remuneration Committee is to review the remuneration packages and policies applicable to senior executives of the Company.

As well as the listed meetings, the Directors also attended numerous other meetings including meetings with the boards of all AFL clubs as well as the boards of state football bodies.

Principal activities

The principal activities of the consolidated entity during the course of the financial year have been to promote, control, manage and encourage Australian Rules Football.

There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the consolidated entity during the year.

Review and results of operations

The operating profit of the AFL and its controlled entities amounted to \$8.2 million, compared with an operating profit of \$6.6 million in 2005.

The AFL's operating profit (before distributions) for 2006 was \$140.1 million (\$130.4 million in 2005), which resulted from revenue generated primarily by television rights and sponsorship income.

AFL distributions in 2006 totalled \$132.6 million (\$123.9 million in 2005). These distributions were to the following entities:

- The AFL clubs received \$96.6 million (\$92 million in 2005).
- The AFL Players' Association received \$8.7 million (\$7.8 million in 2005).
- Development grants to state football bodies totalled \$21.5 million (\$19 million in 2005).
- Ground improvement payments totalled \$5.6 million (\$5.1 million in 2005).
- The AFL Foundation payments totalled \$0.2 million (nil in 2005).

State of affairs

In the opinion of the Directors there were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the consolidated entity that occurred during the financial year under review not otherwise disclosed in this report or the consolidated financial statements.

Events subsequent to balance date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the directors of the Company, to affect significantly the operations of the consolidated entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the consolidated entity in future financial years.

Likely Developments

The Directors do not anticipate any major changes in the basis of operations of the consolidated entity and the future results of those operations in subsequent financial years.

Insurance Premiums

Since the end of the previous financial year, the Company has paid insurance premiums of \$57,489 in respect of Directors' and Officers' liability and legal expenses' insurance contracts, which include cover for current officers, including executive officers of the Company.

The insurance premiums in respect of the officers of the Company relate to:

- Costs and expenses that may be incurred by the relevant officers in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal and whatever their outcome; and
- Other liabilities that may arise from their position, with the exception of conduct involving a wilful breach of duty or improper use of information or position to gain a personal advantage.

Directors' benefits

Since the end of the previous financial year, no Director of the Company has received or become entitled to receive any benefit (other than the fixed salary of a full-time employee of the Company or of a related body corporate) by reason of a contract made by the Company, its controlled entities, or a related body corporate with a Director or with a firm of which a Director is a member, or with an entity in which a Director has a substantial interest other than as disclosed in notes 21 and 22 of the annual financial report.

Lead Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 307C of The Corporations Act 2001

The lead auditor's independence declaration is set out below and forms part of the Directors' report for the year ended October 31, 2006.

Rounding Off

The Company is of a kind referred to in ASIC Class Order 98/100 dated July 10, 1998, and in accordance with that Class Order, amounts in the financial report and Directors' report have been rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Dated at Melbourne this 19th day of February 2007.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:



Mr M C Fitzpatrick

Director



Mr A Demetriou

Director

LEAD AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT 2001

To: the Directors of Australian Football League.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit for the financial year ended October 31, 2006, there has been:

- (i) No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) No contravention of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



KPMG



DM Waters

Partner, Melbourne
February 19, 2007

INCOME STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2006

	Note	Consolidated		The Company	
		2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Revenue	3	232,287	219,788	225,220	213,693
Financing costs		(3,004)	(3,864)	(2,982)	(3,861)
Expenses from operating activities		(221,064)	(209,369)	(214,687)	(203,305)
Profit from operating activities before related income tax expense		8,219	6,555	7,551	6,527
Income tax expense relating to operating activities		-	-	-	-
Profit for the year		8,219	6,555	7,551	6,527

Discussion and analysis of the Income Statements

Consolidated revenue increased by \$12.5 million to \$232.3 million. There were three main areas of increased revenue which contributed to this movement:

- An increase in sponsorship revenue.
- An increase in finals series revenue due to increased attendances.
- An increase in television rights due to contracted increases linked to increases in the CPI.

The consolidated operating profit was \$8.2 million which compared with an operating profit of \$6.6 million in 2005.

There were three main areas of increased expenditure which contributed to this result:

- An increase in distributions to clubs totalling \$4.6 million.
- An increase in development grants to state football bodies totalling \$2.5 million.
- An increase in commercial operations expenditure totalling \$2 million.

The income statements are to be read in conjunction with the discussion and analysis above and the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 122-123.

STATEMENTS OF RECOGNISED INCOME AND EXPENSE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2006

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Net income recognised directly in equity	-	-	-	-
Profit for the year	8,219	6,555	7,551	6,527
Total recognised income and expense for the year	8,219	6,555	7,551	6,527

The statements of recognised income and expense are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 122-123.

BALANCE SHEETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2006

Discussion and analysis of the Balance Sheets

The consolidated entity's total assets decreased by \$31.5 million to \$112.7 million.

The movement in total assets principally comprised:

- A decrease in non-current trade and other receivables of \$19.4 million resulting primarily from the payment of \$18.5 million of debt owing from Mirvac from the sale of Waverley Park; and
- A decrease in cash and cash equivalents of \$7.4 million resulting primarily from the repayment of borrowings.

The consolidated entity's total liabilities decreased by \$37.3 million to \$54.5 million over the year.

The movement in total liabilities principally comprises:

- A decrease in interest bearing loans and borrowings of \$25 million due to reduction in the bank bill facility.
- A decrease in non-current trade and other payables of \$4 million representing the transfer of the current year payments of amounts owing to the clubs from the sale of Waverley Park.
- A decrease in non-current deferred interest of \$2.3 million representing the bringing to profit of deferred interest revenue on the amount to be received from Mirvac for the sale of Waverley Park.

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	5,475	12,913	4,817	12,538
Trade and other receivables	41,077	42,512	39,353	40,957
Inventories	192	162	-	-
Other	1,411	4,270	1,778	4,881
Total current assets	48,155	59,857	45,948	58,376
Non-current Assets				
Trade and other receivables	20,547	39,976	21,047	40,476
Property, plant & equipment	13,769	13,646	12,855	12,784
Other	30,244	30,717	30,244	30,717
Total non-current assets	64,560	84,339	64,146	83,977
Total assets	112,715	144,196	110,094	142,353
Liabilities				
Trade and other payables	24,968	27,006	24,223	25,670
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	75	56	-	-
Provisions	2,669	2,910	2,093	2,415
Deferred interest	2,298	3,343	2,298	3,343
Total current liabilities	30,010	33,315	28,614	31,428
Trade and other payables	4,187	8,187	4,187	8,187
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	15,234	40,163	15,000	40,000
Provisions	3,855	6,650	3,193	6,518
Deferred interest	1,185	3,484	1,185	3,484
Total non-current liabilities	24,461	58,484	23,565	58,189
Total liabilities	54,471	91,799	52,179	89,617
Net assets	58,244	52,397	57,915	52,736
Equity				
Reserves	9,328	6,300	9,328	6,300
Retained earnings	48,916	46,097	48,587	46,436
Total equity	58,244	52,397	57,915	52,736

The balance sheets are to be read in conjunction with the discussion and analysis above and the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 122-123.

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2006

Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Cash Flows

There was a net decrease in cash holdings of the consolidated entity during the year, totalling \$7.4 million.

The major movements in cash during the year included the following:

- Funds from the operating profit for the year totalling \$8.2 million.
- A decrease in other debtors totalling \$18.5 million due to the instalment paid by Mirvac from the sale of Waverley Park.
- A decrease in other liabilities totalling \$3.3 million due to the amortisation of deferred interest revenue on the receivable from Mirvac from the sale of Waverley Park.
- A decrease in borrowings of \$25 million due to repayment of interest-bearing liabilities.

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities				
Cash receipts in the course of operations	235,328	221,823	219,175	216,269
Cash payments in the course of operations	(214,353)	(197,541)	(198,653)	(192,214)
Net cash provided by operating activities	20,975	24,282	20,522	24,055
Cash flows from investing activities				
Interest received	537	690	504	652
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(1,650)	(1,149)	(1,246)	(882)
Proceeds from sale of non-current assets	614	811	481	746
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(499)	352	(261)	516
Cash flows from financing activities				
Interest paid	(3,004)	(3,864)	(2,982)	(3,861)
Repayment of borrowings	(24,910)	(10,015)	(25,000)	(10,000)
Net cash used in financing activities	(27,914)	(13,879)	(27,982)	(13,861)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	(7,438)	10,755	(7,721)	10,710
Cash at the beginning of the financial year	12,913	2,158	12,538	1,828
Cash at the end of the financial year	5,475	12,913	4,817	12,538

The statements of cash flows are to be read in conjunction with the discussion and analysis above and the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 122-123.

NOTES TO THE CONCISE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2006

1. Basis of preparation of the Concise Financial Report

The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*. The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 have been derived from the consolidated entity's full financial report for the financial year. Other information included in the concise financial report is consistent with the consolidated entity's full financial report. The concise financial report does not, and cannot be expected to, provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the consolidated entity as the full financial report.

It has been prepared on the basis of historical costs and except where stated, does not take into account changing money values or fair values of non-current assets.

The accounting policies have been consistently applied by each entity in the consolidated entity and, except where there is a change in accounting policy, are consistent with those of the previous year.

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified to achieve consistency in disclosure with current financial year amounts and other disclosures.

A full description of the accounting policies adopted by the consolidated entity may be found in the consolidated entity's full financial report.

2. Segment reporting

The Company's activities are entirely the administration and promotion of Australian Rules Football and are confined to Australia except for the sale of television rights to various overseas countries and conduct of exhibition matches overseas from time to time, in support of television rights in overseas countries.

4. Contingent Liabilities

- (i) The Company has entered into an agreement with Carlton Football Club, Carlton Cricket and Football Social Club ("the Social Club"), National Australia Bank Limited ("NAB") and the Treasurer of Victoria to guarantee the obligations of the Social Club to NAB in respect of a \$2.515 million commercial bill facility up to a maximum of \$1.125 million.
- (ii) The Company has entered into an agreement with the AFL Players' Association Inc. for a period of five years commencing on November 1, 2006, whereby the Company has an obligation to assume liability for all amounts due to players of a Club where the Club has lost its license to compete in the AFL competition and is suspended from or loses its right to representation on the League. The amounts payable in these circumstances will be offset by any amounts payable to the players in respect of future employment as a player.
- (iii) The Company has entered into an agreement with NAB whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Carlton Football Club Limited to NAB to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (iv) The Company has entered into an agreement with Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited ("ANZ Bank") whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of Sports Facilities Management Limited ("Sports") to the ANZ Bank with respect to Sports borrowings of \$5 million in relation to the reconfiguration of Stadium Australia.
- (v) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac Banking Corporation Limited ("Westpac") whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the North Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.

3. Revenue

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Revenue from operating activities				
Trading operations	218,382	204,754	211,373	198,711
Contra advertising revenue	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Interest revenue on discounted Waverley Park proceeds	3,343	4,324	3,343	4,324
Interest received	537	690	504	652
Net gain on disposal of property, plant and equipment	25	20	-	6
Total	232,287	219,788	225,220	213,693

- (vi) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Sydney Swans Limited to Westpac to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (vii) The Company has entered into an agreement with Commonwealth Bank of Australia Limited ("CBA") whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of Port Adelaide Football Club to CBA to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (viii) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Richmond Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (ix) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Footscray Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (x) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (xi) The Company has entered into an agreement with Bendigo Bank Limited ("Bendigo Bank") whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Geelong Football Club Limited to Bendigo Bank to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (xii) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Hawthorn Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum as at October 31, 2006, of \$500,000.
- (xiii) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$4.4 million. The guarantee expires on October 31, 2007.
- (xiv) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the North Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$4.4 million. The guarantee expires on October 31, 2007.
- (xv) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the St Kilda Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$4.4 million. The guarantee expires on October 31, 2007.
- (xvi) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Richmond Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$4.4 million. The guarantee expires on October 31, 2007.
- (xvii) The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Footscray Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$4.4 million. The guarantee expires on October 31, 2007.

5. International Financial Reporting Standards

These are the Company's first financial statements prepared in accordance with AIFRSs.

The policies set out in the significant accounting policies section of this report have been applied in preparing the financial statements for the financial year ended October 31, 2006, the comparative information presented in these financial statements for the financial year ended October 31, 2005, and in preparation of the opening AIFRS balance sheet at November 1, 2004, (the entity's date of transition).

The transition from previous GAAP to AIFRS has not had a material effect on the Company's income statement, balance sheet and cash flows.

Profit/loss on sale of non-current assets

Under AIFRS the gain or loss on the disposal of property, plant and equipment is recognised on a net basis as a gain or loss rather than separately recognising the consideration received as revenue and the book value of assets disposed as an expense as was the treatment under previous GAAP. This change has resulted in a decrease in revenue of \$44,000 and a corresponding decrease in expenses of \$44,000 for the year ended October 31, 2005.

6. Change in Accounting Policy

In the current financial year, the consolidate entity adopted AASB 132: *Financial Instrument: Disclosure and Presentation* and AASB 139: *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*. This change in accounting policy has been adopted in accordance with the transition rules contained in AASB 1, which does not require the restatement of comparative information for financial instruments within the scope of AASB 132 and AASB 139.

The adoption of AASB 139 has not resulted in any significant adjustments to the opening balance sheet as at November 1, 2005, or the income statement for the year ended October 31, 2006.

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

In the opinion of the Directors of the Australian Football League, the accompanying concise financial report of the consolidated entity, comprising the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended October 31, 2006, set out from pages 119-123:

- (a) Has been derived from or is consistent with the full financial report for the financial year.
- (b) Complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

Dated at Melbourne this 19th day of February 2007.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors:



Mr M C Fitzpatrick
Director



Mr A Demetriou
Director

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT ON CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Scope

We have audited the concise financial report of the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the financial year ended October 31, 2006, consisting the income statement, statement of recognised income and expense, balance sheet, statement of cash flows, accompanying notes 1-6, and the accompanying discussion and analysis of the income statement, statement of recognised income and expense, balance sheet and statement of cash flows and the directors' declaration set out on pages 119-124 in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Company. The Company's directors are responsible for the concise financial report.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the concise financial report is free of material misstatement. We have also performed an independent audit of the full financial report of the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended October 31, 2006. Our audit report on the full financial report was signed on February 19, 2007, and was not subject to any qualification.


Our procedures in respect of the audit of the concise financial report included testing that the information in the concise financial report is consistent with the full financial report and examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts, discussion and

analysis, and other disclosures which were not directly derived from the full financial report. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the concise financial report is presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports* issued in Australia.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion the concise financial report of the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended October 31, 2006, complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.



KPMG



DM Waters
Partner, Melbourne
February 19, 2007

10-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

THE AFL 1997-2006

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Profit & Loss (\$ mill)										
Revenue	82.941	92.420	108.447	110.736	116.562	159.700	170.912	186.260	203.695	215.220
Operating Expenses	38.895	42.855	47.493	46.708	46.229	47.843	52.453	58.112	69.430	72.141
Interest Expense	0.682	0.002	0.002	0.110	1.337	1.766	3.757	4.138	3.861	2.982
Operating Profit	43.364	49.563	60.952	63.918	68.996	110.091	114.702	124.010	130.404	140.097
Payments to Clubs	32.815	36.019	42.153	50.230	61.873	71.228	79.635	89.563	91.964	96.559
Payments to AFLPA	0.700	0.750	3.000	4.000	5.744	6.329	7.656	7.653	7.767	8.701
Game Development Grants	6.534	8.617	12.124	15.156	16.510	17.715	16.505	18.492	18.997	21.495
Ground Improvements	1.416	2.055	2.300	1.760	1.631	5.995	6.241	5.110	5.148	5.591
AFL Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.200
Net Profit before Transfers to Reserves	1.899	2.122	1.375	(7.228)	(16.762)	8.824	4.665	3.192	6.528	7.551
Facilities Development Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.500	3.000	3.600
Strategic Partnership Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.800	1.800
Net Profit/(Deficit)	1.899	2.122	1.375	(7.228)	(16.762)	8.824	4.665	1.692	1.728	2.151
Balance Sheet (\$ mill)										
Total Assets	70.940	64.323	71.237	74.903	110.312	166.862	162.798	146.649	142.353	110.094
Total Liabilities	20.919	12.180	17.719	28.613	80.784	128.510	119.781	100.440	89.617	52.179
Net Assets	50.021	52.143	53.518	46.290	29.528	38.352	43.017	46.209	52.736	57.915
TPP & Club Distribution Statistics (\$ mill)										
Total Player Payments (TPP)	46.400	52.400	68.000	76.000	83.000	89.000	95.000	97.850	100.813	103.565
TPP per Club	2.900	3.275	4.250	4.750	5.188	5.563	5.938	6.116	6.301	6.473
Base Distribution per Club	1.700	1.870	2.220	2.720	3.157	3.532	3.907	4.084	4.270	4.442
Base Distribution as a % of TPP	58.6%	57.1%	52.2%	57.3%	60.9%	63.5%	63.5%	66.8%	67.8%	68.6%
Attendance Statistics (mill)										
Home & Away Season Attendance	5.843	6.119	5.771	5.740	5.921	5.644	5.873	5.910	6.284	6.204
Finals Series Attendance	0.560	0.573	0.472	0.567	0.526	0.449	0.478	0.458	0.480	0.532
Total Premiership Season Attendance	6.403	6.692	6.243	6.307	6.447	6.093	6.352	6.368	6.764	6.736
Pre-Season Attendance	0.297	0.299	0.274	0.326	0.398	0.338	0.266	0.259	0.307	0.235
Total Attendance	6.700	6.991	6.517	6.633	6.846	6.431	6.618	6.627	7.071	6.971
Membership Statistics										
Total of Club Members *	382,345	422,815	441,711	438,504	447,359	449,353	463,171	494,311	506,509	519,126
No. of Clubs in the AFL	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Average No. of Members per Club	23,897	26,426	27,607	27,407	27,960	28,085	28,948	30,894	31,657	32,445
Total AFL Members	50,620	52,034	52,020	52,187	50,660	47,511	45,174	45,129	44,866	44,726

* Includes AFL Club Support Members.
2002 and 2003 Profit & Loss figures exclude amounts related to the sale of Waverley Park.
All Revenue and Operating Expenses figures exclude contra advertising received from TV Broadcasters.

AFL COMMITTEES AND ADVISORS

AFL Executive



Andrew Demetriou,
Chief Executive
Officer



Adrian Anderson,
General Manager
– Football
Operations



Ian Anderson,
Chief Financial
Officer



Andrew Dillon,
General Manager
– Legal and
Business Affairs



Dale Holmes,
General Manager
– NSW/ACT



David Matthews,
General Manager
– National and
International
Game Development



Gillon McLachlan,
Chief Broadcasting
and Commercial
Officer



Colin McLeod,
General Manager
– Marketing,
Communications
and Public Affairs



Tony Peek,
assistant to
the CEO

AFL Audit Committee

Mike Fitzpatrick (chairman),
Ron Evans, Colin Carter

AFL Remuneration Committee

Ron Evans (chairman),
Bob Hammond

AFL Broadcasting Sub-committee

Ron Evans (chairman),
Andrew Demetriou,
Ben Buckley, Mike Fitzpatrick,
Gillon McLachlan

AFL Football Operations Sub-committee

Adrian Anderson (chairman),
Rod Austin, Roger Berryman,
Jeff Gieschen, Patrick Keane,
Jill Lindsay, Dean Moore,
Kevin Sheehan, Ken Wood,
David Lever, Tess McManus,
Scott Taylor, Sandra Thomas,
George De Crespigny

AFL Match Review Panel

Peter Schwab (chairman),
Peter Carey, Andrew McKay,
Scott Taylor (secretary)

AFL Tribunal

David Jones (chairman),
John Hassett (deputy chairman),
Emmett Dunne, Michael Sexton,
Stewart Loewe, David Pittman,
Wayne Schimmelbusch,
Richard Loveridge,
Scott Taylor (secretary)

AFL Legal Counsel for AFL Tribunal

Will Houghton QC, Andrew Tinney

AFL Appeals Board

Peter O'Callaghan QC
(chairman), Brian Collis QC
(deputy chair), Brian Bourke,
John Schultz, Michael Green,
Roger Berryman (secretary)

AFL Mediators (trade week)

Jack Rush, QC,
Michael Hennessy

AFL Investigations Officers

John Coburn, Bill Kneebone,
Allan Roberts

AFL Grievance Tribunal

Jack Rush, QC (chairman),
Darren Baxter, James Dowsley,
Kevin Power, Michael Moncrieff,
Roger Berryman (secretary)

AFL Laws of the Game Committee

Adrian Anderson (chairman),
Stan Alves, Kevin Bartlett,
Nathan Buckley,
Ed Biggs, Brendon Gale,
John Halbert, Rowan Sawers,
Michael Sexton

AFL Research Board

Dr Ross Smith (chairman),
Brian Cook, Dr Peter Harcourt,
Prof Mark Hargreaves,
Paul Lew, David Parkin,
Dr Hugh Seward,
Lawrie Woodman,
Roger Berryman (secretary)

AFL Umpiring Selection Panel

Jeff Gieschen, Peter Howe,
Rowan Sawers

AFL Medical Officers

Dr Peter Harcourt,
Dr Harry Unglik

AFL All-Australian and AFL Rising Star Selectors

Andrew Demetriou (chairman),
Adrian Anderson,
Rod Austin, Gerard Healy,
Neil Kerley, Kevin Bartlett,
Robert Walls, Chris Mainwaring,
Kevin Sheehan,
Roger Berryman (secretary)

International Rules Series Selectors

Kevin Sheedy (coach),
Gerard Healy (chairman),
Jim Stynes, Rod Austin,
Danny Frawley, Stephen Silvagni

Australian Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee

Ron Evans (chairman),
Brian Atkinson, Kevin Bartlett,
Brendon Gale, Harry Gordon,
Tim Lane, Mike Sheahan,
Patrick Smith, Tom Reynolds,
Leigh Whicker, Caroline Wilson,
Roger Berryman (secretary)

AFL International Game Development Committee

David Matthews (chairman),
Colin McLeod, Simon Lethlean,
Dean Moore, Dean Warren,
Kevin Sheehan, David Lever,
Peter Schwab, Andrew Catterall

AFL Group Training Company Board

Bill Kelty (chairman), Adrian
Anderson, Graeme Billings,
Brendon Gale, Michael Green,
Beverly Knight, David McKay,
David Matthews, Marilyn Morgan,
Philip Wallbridge (CEO),
John Kennedy (secretary)

AFL Respect and Responsibility Advisory Group

Prof Jenny Morgan (chairman),
Deb Bryant, Donna Griffin,
Fiona Sharkie, Lyn Walker,
Michael Daniher, Patrick
Tidmarsh, Dr Angela Williams,
Michael Flood, Assistant
Commissioner Leigh Gassner,
Inspector Sue Clark,
Tony Peek, Dr Melanie Heenan,
Jane Hollman, Andrew Dillon

AFL Legal Advisors

Browne & Co.



Next Generation

SECURING THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL





NEXT GENERATION: AN OVERVIEW

The AFL Commission and Administration spent more than eight months consulting with clubs, players, state and territory football bodies, supporters and those developing the game at the grassroots.

We wanted to ensure that we secured the future of Australian Football – Australia's only Indigenous game.

Although it took some eight months to complete, the development of our *Next Generation* financial strategy was perhaps the easy part.

During the next five years, the implementation of our financial strategy is an even bigger challenge to ensure we deliver the right outcomes to maximise the investment of some \$1.4 billion at all levels of our game consistent with our long-term vision for Australian Football to 2015 and beyond.

This period is an exciting time for Australian Football. The decisions we make in this time will impact on the strength of our game for many generations. Getting our plans right is a challenge for all involved in our game, and an important responsibility for the AFL Commission and executive.

Planning, preparation and patience were the key ingredients in delivering our various media rights agreements and corporate partnerships for 2007 and beyond and those same key ingredients were applied to the development of our *Next Generation* strategy.

We will apply the same process in the implementation stage to ensure that our investment delivers the outcomes we are seeking to secure the future of the game at all levels.

Next Generation has been built around the following principles:

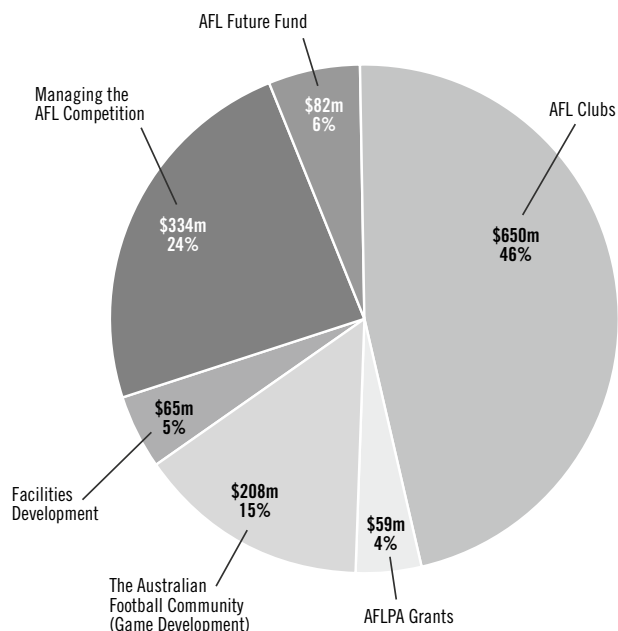
- To administer our game to ensure it remains the most exciting in Australian sport.
- To build a stronger relationship with our supporters by providing the best sports entertainment experience.
- To continue to expand the national footprint of our game.
- To secure the future of our 16-club competition.
- To make sure our clubs are financially secure and competitive – on and off the field.
- To provide the best possible benefits for AFL players.
- To drive the next generation of elite athletes to choose our game before any competition.
- To grow our existing and passionate supporter base and our grassroots and community competitions.
- To provide more opportunities for participation.
- To develop new markets to continue our strong growth.
- To provide the best facilities to enhance the Australian Football experience.
- To retain our position as a community leader.
- To plan and provide for the future economic strength of Australian Football.

The record amount of available funding has given us the opportunity to fulfil those principles – and the greatest beneficiaries will be the supporters of our game.

After consideration of the guiding principles, the AFL Commission has determined a balanced and responsible set of policies to achieve the following outcomes by 2011:

- We will provide the greatest investment into our game in the history of Australian Football.
- We will secure the future of our 16-club competition.
- We will fund and support our clubs to assist them to be competitive on and off the field.
- We will establish a strong Australian Football base in south-east Queensland and greater Sydney in NSW.
- We will provide for our players at every phase of their careers, including a substantial package of benefits on retirement.
- We will provide record game development funding of \$208 million to increase participation – to a target of 700,000 participants – including more than \$100 million for the development of Australian Football in NSW and Queensland.
- We will collaborate to fund stadium redevelopment, and facilities at all levels of our game.
- We will build a cash reserve – \$82 million – as a Future Fund providing security against the unforeseen, and to allow for investment in new commercial opportunities.
- We will freeze general admission prices for our supporters for the 2007 Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the 2007 NAB Cup.

Summary of AFL Financial Strategy 2007-2011



Total investment \$1.4 billion



NEXT GENERATION POLICY

AFL CLUBS

Principles

To secure the future of the 16-club AFL competition; to make sure our clubs are financially secure and competitive – on and off the field.

Outcomes

More than \$650 million has been allocated to AFL clubs over the next five years under the *Next Generation* strategy – the most significant level of financial support for clubs in the history of the game.

Key elements include:

Item	Total 2007-2011
Base distribution of \$28.1 million per club to fully fund increases in Total Player Payments	\$449 million
Additional \$6 million per club over five years in non-total player payments distribution	\$96 million
Increased annual special distribution from \$5.4 million to \$6.2 million per year, applied to a broader group of disadvantaged clubs	\$31 million
Increased prizemoney for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season by \$1 million per year. Premiership season total pool of \$2.6 million and NAB Cup total of \$620,000	\$16 million
Other payments continued to clubs for AFL membership, licensing, signage, travel support, etc.	\$53 million
Strategic partnership fund of \$1 million per year plus carryover of \$1.8 million from 2005-2006	\$5 million
Total	\$650 million

In addition, AFL clubs will also receive financial support in the following areas:

- More than \$13 million in funding from the Facilities Development Reserve to help improve club facility developments.
- Further funding for stadium developments at Subiaco Oval, AAMI Stadium, Gold Coast Stadium, Carrara, and the SCG to benefit participating clubs and their supporters.
- More than \$5 million per annum in club travel and accommodation subsidies.
- Improvements in match returns/economics at key stadiums.
- Expansion of shared services – delivers savings and growth to clubs.
- Support for second/new markets strategies.
- Collectively benefit from more than \$5 million per year (or \$25 million over five years) in media contra.

AFL PLAYERS

Principles

To provide the best possible benefits for AFL players; to drive the next generation of elite athletes to choose to play our game.

Outcomes

Under the new Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiated with the AFL Players' Association, which was announced in July 2006, players will receive \$794 million in Total Player Payments and other associated benefits from 2007-2011. This total includes \$59 million to the AFLPA to support a range of player services, including training and education grants, counselling, a retirement fund, medical insurance and a hardship fund for former players.

Key elements include:

Item	Total 2007-2011
Total Player Payments	\$611.8 million
Additional service agreements and allowances for players	\$117.4 million
Player retirement fund	\$32 million
AFLPA player development, welfare and hardship funds	\$25.5 million
Player share of premiership season prizemoney	\$5.5 million
Player marketing payments to promote Telstra new media network	\$1.5 million
Total	\$793.7 million

Other key elements include:

- Increase of 10 per cent in the minimum wage and prescribed payments for first and second-year players in 2007.
- Increase of about 15 per cent in the minimum rookie payment in 2007.
- Allocation of about \$2 million by the players from Total Player Payments to a past player health and wellbeing fund, for past players experiencing health-related hardship.

Total Player Payments for the next five years will be as follows:

- 2007 – \$111.2 million (\$6,943,750 per club)
- 2008 – \$118.9 million (\$7,431,250 per club)
- 2009 – \$123.1 million (\$7,693,750 per club)
- 2010 – \$127.2 million (\$7,950,000 per club)
- 2011 – \$131.4 million (\$8,212,500 per club)



AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

Principles

To build a stronger relationship with our supporters at all levels; to continue to expand the national footprint of our game; to grow our existing supporter base; to develop new markets; to provide more opportunities to participate in our game.

Outcomes

The AFL will allocate a record \$208 million to game development from 2007-2011 – an increase of 60 per cent on 2002-2006. This investment has a target participation level of 700,000 by 2011 – an increase of 25 per cent on 2006 forecasts.

This funding will be split between national programs, state and territory grants, and a fund to develop new markets.

The AFL will work in partnership with state and territory affiliates across the country to support the work of community clubs, NAB AFL Auskick clinics and schools in metropolitan, regional and country centres.

The \$208 million in funding will be used to:

- Deliver a more comprehensive schools program to capture the next generations of children seeking a fun, safe and healthy sporting activity.
- Provide more direct support for junior leagues and clubs as the nurseries for metropolitan and country football.
- Promote and develop AFL Recreational Football, women's football and implement a national multicultural program to provide a fun, healthy, physical option to reach sections of the community not yet engaged in our game.
- Upgrade and develop community facilities to link participation growth and deliver a quality environment that enhances the enjoyment of the game for players, officials and spectators involved in metropolitan and country football.
- Maximise the growth of the game in the traditional football states, while also investing more in NSW and Queensland where much of the new growth is predicted.
- Work in partnership with federal, state and local governments, schools and clubs to improve the quality environments for those participating in our game.
- Increase the funding of talent identification programs and maintain the push to make Australian Football the first choice of elite athletes.
- Expand the support and provide high quality programs and acknowledgement for the 61,000-plus volunteers whose passion and community volunteer spirit has nurtured the growth of the game.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

Principle

To provide the best facilities to enhance the Australian Football experience.

- The AFL will commit \$65 million to provide the best possible stadium experiences for supporters, elite training facilities for AFL players, and quality facilities for participants at community level.
- \$12.5 million will be allocated to assist the development of community facilities in metropolitan and regional areas.
- \$28 million will fund improvements at the MCG, AAMI Stadium, Skilled Stadium and Telstra Stadium.
- \$24.5 million has been set aside to provide facilities improvements as required.

MANAGING THE AFL COMPETITION

Principles

To administer our game to ensure it remains the most exciting in Australian sport; to build a stronger relationship with our supporters by providing the best sports entertainment experience; to provide the best facilities; to continue to expand the national footprint.

Outcomes

The AFL:

- Will continue to recognise the importance of developing and enhancing the competition over the next five years through the allocation of \$334 million to manage the game. This includes administering, marketing and promoting the competition, travel and accommodation for our teams, increased investment in shared services, and the cost of staging the game. Competition management costs, as a percentage of total revenue, have dropped from 28 per cent to 24 per cent when compared with the period 2002-2006.
- Will continue to improve the experience and comfort of supporters attending AFL games by supporting the upgrade of facilities at Subiaco Oval, AAMI Stadium, the SCG and Gold Coast Stadium, Carrara. Support has already been provided for the development of the Gabba, Telstra Stadium, Skilled Stadium, the MCG, Telstra Dome and Aurora Stadium.
- Will continue to expand the national footprint of the game across Australia.
- Wants to play games in south-east Queensland every week of the season by 2015. To achieve this aim, significant investment in marketing, promotion and fan development, increased game development activity, establishing business and government relationships and stadium redevelopment, will be allocated to the Gold Coast region to increase participation and support. The Gold Coast will also benefit from up to 10 games being played by the Kangaroos at Carrara Oval from 2007-2009.
- Wants to play games in greater Sydney every week of the season by 2015. To achieve this aim, the AFL will invest in increased game development activity and programs to attract people to matches involving the Sydney Swans at Telstra Stadium.

FUTURE FUND

Principle

To plan and provide for the future economic strength of Australian Football.

- The AFL will underpin the financial future of the game by setting aside appropriate reserves to strengthen our future and provide security to deal with unforeseen economic circumstances.
- The AFL Commission will allocate \$82 million over the next five years to establish a Future Fund.
- One of the aims of the Future Fund is to strengthen the asset base of the competition and allow us to consider future investments to secure new revenue streams for the competition.
- An example of such an asset is Telstra Dome – set to revert to AFL ownership in 2025.

