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AUSTRALIANS DON'T WANT TO PAY TO WATCH SPORT ON TV

Free TV Australia has dismissed the latest attempt by the pay TV lobby group ASTRA to force Australians to pay for sport that they currently see live and free on free-to-air television.

Free TV Chairman, Harold Mitchell says, "Pay TV's call last year for the antisiphoning list to be dismantled fell on deaf ears. So now they are having another go, but this time they are trying to do it by stealth."

The facts are:

- Over 72% of Australians choose to rely exclusively on free-to-air television for their sport, news and entertainment.
- In the last three years under the existing antisiphoning rules, sporting codes such as the AFL, the NRL and Cricket have all negotiated record broadcasting rights deals - proof that sporting rights in Australia are fully valued.

Mr Mitchell says, "Pay TV is trying to trick the public and policy makers with a call for the current system to be replaced with a 'dual rights' scheme where free-to-air and pay TV rights for listed sports are sold separately.

"It's nonsense to suggest that a dual rights scheme would deliver the same amount and quality of sport on free-to-air television. This is a ploy to force Australians to pay to watch their favourite sport on television."

Mitchell adds, "You only have to look at the UK where a dual-rights scheme has seen major sports like the Ashes cricket migrate to pay TV, depriving millions of viewers from watching the game live and free.

"Now that all Australians have converted to digital television, the only change that the Parliament should consider is to enable free-to-air broadcasters to show listed sports on all their channels."

**For more information contact Free TV Australia on (02) 8968 7100
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