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ACMA report confirms that there is no hoarding of sport on Free TV

The latest Australian Media and Communications Authority (ACMA) report on the use of sporting rights held by Free TV broadcasters demonstrates that there is no hoarding of rights.

Free TV CEO, Julie Flynn, said "the report confirms that broadcasters show the events to which they have acquired rights and everything else is available to pay TV"

"This is the essence of the antisiphoning list. It has been designed to ensure that all Australians are able to see major sporting events on television for free".

"We are bemused by the latest attack on Free TV rights by the pay TV lobby group ASTRA. They either do not understand how the antisiphoning list works or they are deliberately misinterpreting the operations of the list as part of their ongoing battle to force Australians to pay up to a \$100 a month to see sports they have traditionally seen for free" Ms Flynn said.

"The rules give Free TV broadcasters first right to bid for listed sports and if they are not acquired, rights are available to pay TV operators."

"Last year there were 5 games of AFL and 2 games of NRL on television every weekend. As everyone who is a football fan knows these are the rights held by Free TV broadcasters. Everything is available to and shown by pay TV." Ms Flynn said.

"The Australian Open Tennis tournament is one of the most popular events on Australian television and Channel 7 provides a daily coverage of the event from start of the days play through to the close - and often into the early hours of the next day."

"It is misleading in the extreme to suggest that the rules are not operating as intended to deliver the best coverage of the best games in this multi-round event."

Free TV independently commissioned monitoring of the pay TV coverage of the 2007 Australian Open. It reveals that they showed fewer games live and in full than Channel 7 and that the majority of the games shown by Fox Sports had already been broadcast on Channel 7.

Free TV calls on pay TV to publish a full account of their own coverage of listed events for which they have rights.

"Free TV broadcasters continue to cooperate with ACMA to provide a detailed accounting of their use of listed sports. But we remain concerned that without a similar accounting for the coverage of these events from pay TV, the figures are open to misrepresentation by those who would force Australians to pay to watch major sporting events. We call on the government to ensure that this does not happen." Ms Flynn said.

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