

Media Release
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What the Devil – don't make Australians pay twice for new AFL team

Amid all the excitement about the launch of Tasmania's new AFL and AFLW Club, the 'Devils', Free TV issued a timely reminder about the importance of keeping iconic sports available for all Australians to watch for free.

Free TV CEO Bridget Fair said "Australian taxpayers are already forking out about \$300 million towards new football stadiums in Hobart and Launceston. And that's on top of the \$375 million being paid just by Tasmanian taxpayers.

"With the Devils set to join the national stage in the state's iconic new kit it's more important than ever that Australians are not forced to pay subscription streamers on top just to watch their favourite sporting teams play in the very stadiums they have already paid for.

"The Australian Government has new laws before Parliament that aim to keep iconic sports free, and yesterday's announcement of the AFL's 19th club is an important reminder of the importance of sport in the lives of all Australians. Sport is a social connector and encourages kids to be active. But while Australians have always had free access to sports like the AFL, NRL, cricket and Olympics, global streamers are now buying them up and putting them behind a paywall. We're already seeing this with Amazon buying exclusive rights to ICC cricket tournaments including the next Cricket World Cup.

"The Government must make sure the laws safeguard free access for viewers, whether they get their free TV over the air using an aerial, or the increasing number who watch over the internet using a free streaming app like 7plus, 9Now or 10 Play."

"The bill before parliament stops subscription services like Amazon, Apple and Disney from buying exclusive terrestrial broadcast rights, but it doesn't guarantee the availability of free coverage for the increasing number of Australians who rely on the internet for free TV. As it stands, people who watch free sport through the internet have no guarantees paid streaming services won't buy up the rights and lock broadcasts behind paywalls.

"The Bill should require that both the free broadcast and free digital streaming rights must be acquired by a free broadcaster before the event can be acquired by a subscription provider.

Free TV is calling for Parliament to keep TV Free for Everyone and calls for the following changes to the Bill:

- Require that both the free broadcast and free digital streaming rights be acquired by a free broadcaster before the event can be acquired by a pay TV or subscription streaming provider.
- Do not extend the automatic de-listing period from six to 12 months as many sporting events are acquired within this timeframe.

ENDS

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ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is a leading media industry organisation. It represents all of Australia's commercial free-to-air television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Seven West Media, Nine Entertainment Co, Network 10, Southern Cross Austereo, WIN Network and Imparja Television.