

¹ Michael Brett Young, 'From Commitment to Culture: The 2015 Review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006': http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/justice/resources/3848843f-afd1-47a5-9279-1a1a87ac2aad/report_final_charter_review_2015.pdf

² 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights', adopted and entered into force 3 January 1976: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

³ Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Future Anti-siphoning List: http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/1135_antisiphoning.pdf; David Rowe, 'To Serve and To Sell: Media Sport and Cultural Citizenship', University of Newcastle: <http://www.hrca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/how-you-play-the-game-fin.pdf>

⁴ Danielle Ireland-Piper and Kim Weinert. (2014) 'Is there a "Right" to sport?': ISSN 1836-1129: <http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=slej>

⁵ Resolution A/RES/70/1 adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development': http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1

Second reading

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Major Sporting Events Amendment (AFL Grand Final Tickets) Bill 2017 ensures that half of all tickets to the AFL Grand Final are made available to members of the competing clubs.

Each year many members of the competing clubs at the AFL Grand Final miss out on experiencing footy's biggest day due to unfair ticket allocation.

Club members are the lifeblood of our footy clubs, they provide the passion and the financial support to keep our footy clubs alive and successful.

AFL club membership numbers have soared over the past 25 years.

This year, 907 561 people have signed up to be members of AFL clubs, an average of around 50 000 per club.

The four most supported Victorian clubs, Collingwood, Hawthorn, Richmond and Essendon, have over 65 000 each.

This compares to just 187 288 members of all AFL clubs in 1992, an average of just above 12 000 per club.

This substantial growth in club membership has significantly increased revenue to AFL clubs, resulting in greater financial sustainability.

The growth in club members has resulted from an increased emphasis on footy fans becoming club members to financially support their club.

But growth in AFL tickets available to members of the competing clubs has not kept pace.

In 2017, around 34 000 competing club members will be able to access grand final tickets — an increase of 4000 from the previous year, and an increase of around 20 000 from around 14 000 allocated in 1990.

The remaining 66 000 tickets are divided between the Melbourne Cricket Club, AFL and Medallion Club members, allocated to non-competing clubs, sold as part of corporate packages costing \$1000 or more, or given to sponsors.

Gallingly, grand final ticket packages have been on sale since the start of the year, and at the time of this speech tickets can be purchased as part of the 'Ultimate' package for \$4030, which includes:

- a category 1 seat at the AFL Grand Final;
- a so-called 'unrivalled pre-game dining experience' at the Atlantic restaurant;
- interviews and appearances by top-tier AFL players and coaches;
- chauffeur transfers to the MCG;
- inner-sanctum 'behind the scenes' pre-game experience;
- access to a premium private bar within the MCG; and
- 'exclusive' gifts.

Meanwhile, thousands of club members of the two competing teams who have paid up at the start of the year to support their club and attend week in, week out will miss out on grand final tickets.

While the increase announced this year of 4000 tickets to competing club members is welcome, the AFL Fans Association has called for at least half of all tickets — or 50 000 of the 100 000 MCG capacity — to be made available to competing club members.

This is a reasonable figure that still sits below members' allocations to similar events internationally such as the UEFA Champions League Final, which allocates 54 per cent of tickets to competing clubs, and the FA Cup Final, which allocates 64 per cent of tickets to competing clubs.

Not only is the current ticket allocation unfair, it creates an environment for illegal ticket scalping to flourish.

By severely restricting the amount of tickets available to competing club members, fans missing out on that allocation have two options: to source tickets through scalpers, or purchase exorbitantly priced 'package deals'.

Each year many tickets are advertised for sale through the black market, despite it being illegal through the Major Sporting Events Act 2009.

An increase in the proportion of tickets allocated to club members would go part way to reducing scalping, and it would certainly increase equitable access for club members.

The AFL Grand Final is a cultural and sporting icon, and its accessibility for all people should be maximised.

The Major Sporting Events Act 2009 permits the Minister for Tourism and Major Events to make such a change.

And despite calls from the Victorian Greens spokesperson for sport, Sam Hibbins, the minister has refused to do so.

This bill delivers a fairer ticketing allocation and will reduce scalping through:

clause 4 would make the AFL Grand Final a sports ticketing event. This declaration currently occurs at the discretion of the minister under section 152 of the act, but this bill will make it mandatory in order to guarantee the specified ticket allocation for competing club members.

clause 7 would:

require the AFL Grand Final ticket scheme to provide for half of all tickets to be made available to members of the competing clubs;

provide that any unsold tickets for competing club members can be made available to the general public after a reasonable period of time;

prevent tickets allocated to members of the competing clubs being sold in conjunction with anything other than attendance to the AFL Grand Final (for example, food and entertainment or access to reserved areas); and

require the AFL Grand Final ticket scheme to be lodged three months before the grand final.

The ability of non-competing clubs to sell and profit from onselling their grand final tickets through package deals is cited by the AFL in this year's AFL Grand Final ticket scheme proposal as a reason to retain the current ticketing allocations.

But this argument ignores the significant increase in revenue clubs receive from recent growth in club membership.

It also ignores the fact that an increased grand final ticket allocation is likely to have a positive impact in terms of attracting and retaining club members.

Of course, there are other ways of increasing the proportion of tickets allocated to competing club members.

The AFL's increased allocation for club members is welcome, but there's no commitment from the AFL to reaching the 50 per cent allocation to competing club members.

There has been no commitment from the Minister for Tourism and Major Events to use his powers within the major sporting events legislation to increase ticket allocation for competing club members.

So this bill represents the fans' best chance at a fairer grand final ticket allocation.

The AFL Fans Association has campaigned extensively for this change, collecting 3360 signatures of footy fans supporting the increase.

I'd like to acknowledge the work of the AFL Fans Association, particularly President Gerry Eeman, in fighting for more grand final tickets for competing club members on behalf of all football fans.

Australian Rules football is part of the fabric of Victoria's society.

And the grand final is the pinnacle of our sport.

It should be a day for fans of competing clubs, not corporates.

I urge members to support this bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan).

Debate adjourned until Wednesday, 6 September.