

CORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into country football

Horsham – 11 March 2004

Members

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Mr B. F. Ryan (sworn).

The CHAIR — Welcome, everybody, and thank you for attending our inquiry into country football. We welcome Hugh Delahunty, the local member for Lowan, who is with us today. Under the powers conferred on this committee under the Constitution Act and the Parliamentary Committees Act, this committee is empowered take all evidence at these hearings on oath or affirmation. I wish to advise all present at these hearings that all evidence taken by this committee, including submissions, is, under the provisions of the Constitution Act, granted immunity from judicial review. I also wish to advise witnesses that any comments made by witnesses outside the committee's hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege.

Brendan, for the purposes of the transcript, would you mind giving us your full name and address and advise us whether you are presenting on behalf of an organisation and if so what that organisation is and your position in the organisation.

Mr RYAN — Brendan Frederick Ryan. My address is 16 Tydeman Street, Horsham. I was formerly on the VCFL board, so in a sense today I am speaking on my own behalf but with a background in the VCFL. I have been in charge of junior development in the VCFL for in excess of 10 years.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. Your evidence will be taken down and become public evidence in due course. If you could now make your presentation, there may be some questions afterwards.

Mr RYAN — Thanks very much, Ben. I do appreciate the opportunity to have my say today. I wanted to make a couple of points before starting. Firstly, I was formerly a member of the VCFL, so I am not actually speaking on behalf of the VCFL today.

Overheads shown.

Mr RYAN — I believe you may have actually seen some of the slides previously because I prepared this document for the VCFL. I am not sure at the moment whether some of the information has already been communicated to you. I will go through the slides and I will be happy to answer any questions. Perhaps I will try to whip through the slides as quickly as I can and get onto the recommendations section.

In my view, the inquiry is broader than football. You will probably notice that I am a school principal. I view the inquiry in broader terms than just simply football. I wanted to establish a context before I went through the presentation. On the first slide I refer to Fiona Stanley. She has done a tremendous amount of work, as you know, in the adolescent health area and for young people. She has come to the conclusion, clearly, that the health of young people has deteriorated and there is need for more investment in that area in the community. That investment, that commitment, needs to come through government.

Last week you may have noticed in the *Herald Sun* there was an article by Rob Moodie from Vichealth. There were a number of interesting statements in that article. The very first that I have listed there for you is one that really hits home to us. Of 600 adolescents who went through the Children's Court, only 1 child was involved in organised sport. I think that says something to us. So there is a critical step to connect the young people up with the community, and clearly football provides that critical step.

In terms of the VCFL, it has established quite a professional network of people to support football throughout the state. This slide lists the various people who are involved at that level. Please note that the regional managers have been reduced to 10, and you are probably aware that the number of regions recently was cut back from 14 to 10. We are in a region in the Wimmera which will be combining with the North Central region. The reason for that was the small number of leagues within the region. The VCFL is by far the no. 1 football body in Australia, and we need to understand that. The number of players, the number of leagues, the number of clubs, participants and the fact that it injects an enormous amount of money into the community on a yearly basis makes it the no. 1 football body in Australia.

The VCFL provides quite a range of programs, and I have tried to summarise them on this slide. You can see the varied service support that is provided — I have listed it. There are finance, education and commercial programs. They are detailed there; you have a handout, so you can peruse them. I want to make the point that the VCFL works in areas beyond football. I have listed them under the heading 'Managing diversity'. There are a number of social-conscience issues in the community, and I have tried to list them on this slide, and we need to understand that the VCFL is involved in them.

In terms of growth of teams in football in Victoria, there has been a steady growth of teams throughout the state. This graph shows you that the VCFL has certainly been part of the increase in the number of teams that are occupying grounds in country Victoria every weekend. Of course there is a misconception that the VCFL, in terms of some of the locals, is going down the gurgler. I do not believe that is the truth.

The real issue is related to you on this page. The growth has occurred in the junior age groups — that is, 5 to 12 and 13 to 19 — whereas in the senior age group there has been a significant drop. So player numbers in the 13 to 19 age group have increased by 13 per cent, whereas the open age group has dropped by 12.5 per cent. That is a point I will get back to — that is, that there is a significant and ongoing problem with retention as far as football is concerned and that we are having people drop out of the system.

You may have seen this map previously. It has been publicised in a number of journals — I think originally in *Regional Matters: An Atlas of Regional Victoria*, which was compiled through each Victorian government department and is available on the Information Victoria web site. It indicates where the clubs have disappeared from and the amalgamation and losses of clubs. Then when you look at the next slide and put it against the population trends you can see that the clubs have disappeared in the areas where there has been an annual population loss of significant proportions, and I think there is a direct correlation with that data.

To give a local perspective, there are a number of communities here in the Wimmera and close by where their football clubs have completely disappeared, and it has had a devastating effect on the community. This slide shows Gerang-Kiata. I was up there some months ago and had a look at the ground. You can see the condition of it; it is a shame that is like that, because football is basically not played there any more. This slide shows Longerenong College, gentlemen. It is a cow paddock! When I first arrived in Horsham over 30 years ago Longerenong College was the strongest football team in the Horsham and District League.

This next slide is not meant to be any criticism of Horsham council, but it shows Oatlands Park. It is now a housing plot. The ground and the facilities have disappeared, and the homeless football club no longer exists here in Horsham. This slide shows Wonwondah. I actually played football there. You can see the remnants of the old pavilion, and that is now a wheat field, or at least a crop of some description. There are only 11 students at Netherby now. Once again, if you had been in that area, you would see that basically the facilities are now dilapidated. And of course Dimboola is not far down the road. Halls Gap has a nice oval, and they still play cricket, but there are no football posts there any more. They are all areas where football has declined and we no longer have football clubs.

This slide looks at the population decline in schools and football clubs. Once again there is a strong connection between the decline in the football clubs and the school reorganisation proposals that have taken place in previous years. I might add that a number of those reorganisation situations took place some years back now.

Why do clubs struggle? The next slide looks at lack of players, declining population, loss of the school, a lack of competitiveness as far as players are concerned and the fact that some leagues collapsed when a number of teams within that league disappeared. This graph shows Victorian football participants compared to soccer participants. Clearly football remains the no. 1 sport in Victoria amongst the boys. Look at Victoria on this next slide. The graph shows total football indicated in red and junior football in yellow. If you look across to New South Wales, those same colours show substantial participation in soccer — that is, total soccer and junior soccer. Once again that shows the difference in the culture between the two largest states.

A lot of work has been put into the AFL Auskick program, and it has grown significantly. On this graph you can see the growth in country participation, and you can see that Victoria-wide there has been a significant growth. The only point I would like to make there is that I am wondering whether the growth needs to be halted to some extent and we need to concentrate more on the quality of what we are providing. The fact is that the retention rate is dreadful, and we need to make sure that what we are providing is a good quality program rather than looking for more numbers. This next graph shows Auskick trends, and I think I have just covered that.

With Victorian Secondary Schools Sports Association football — once again my school background is coming out here — there has been a decline. Interestingly there is quite a significant increase in the number of females playing football. But notice that there is an ongoing decline in the football area, whereas the other sports are either maintaining their numbers or increasing the number of participants. Why is football declining in schools? There are a lot of reasons, and I will come back to this issue when I talk about recommendations. The issue that is in the

paper at the moment, and I will address it even though it has become a bit of a political football, relates to staff gender in schools.

There is an issue with insurance in schools. You realise that parents have to take out their own insurance coverage if they get injured at football. I think the issue of role models in general, both in a classroom and from a player perspective, is a major issue in schools. I will come back to both of those issues. Once again, this next graph shows that football has declined in schools, and I do not think that is a surprise to anybody. This next graph shows the comparison of youth age trends between the clubs and schools. Once again it indicates that the school statistics are going backwards.

The number of people farming is a key issue. Going on ABS statistics, the number of people on farms has decreased by 24 per cent during that period — that is, 1986 to 2002. I think that is a very significant issue, particularly in the smaller communities. I have no doubt that the committee has already previously focused on that issue.

This next graph shows statewide participation rates. I think this committee needs to give local communities a pat on the back in the country for the work they do. This graph indicates that in terms of our participation rates in the country we do much, much better than the metropolitan area.

For every single shire you will find the same data. Unfortunately that graph is a little bit difficult to read. I would like to give the people in the Wimmera a pat on the back because they do a fantastic job. You will notice that that is the first area listed on that graph. The lighter green line on the graph indicates that the participation rates here in the Wimmera are outstanding. Once again, it goes through the various regions and the same applies across the state. The alarming concern from that graph is the yellow line, which shows the participation rates at the senior level. Look at the differences in retention rates and the drop off; they are quite significant.

I have picked out a few local government areas. You gentlemen would be from various areas of the state. You will notice I have tried to list a few there — the largest centres. I have included Horsham there. On the next one I have looked at some of the smaller shires, which are listed there. Once again, participation rates are wonderful in those smaller areas and a credit to everybody who is involved with the development program and the municipalities that support them in those areas. What are the effects of the decline? I have listed on this slide quite a number of issues. I will go through them briefly.

On service delivery, I think that when a community football club collapses there are issues related to user pays, risk analysis and lack of equity in the community. In terms of the infrastructure, many of you will have small public halls in areas in your electorate. You will notice the deterioration in many of those. It is often related to the fact that the local football club has gone out of existence or is in decline. On community building, when we get to the recommendations I will come back to this issue strongly. In my opinion this is the key issue for this particular committee. I know we are talking about football, but we are talking about the importance of a football club tying groups together. I think it is about fragmentation in the communities when we lose the football clubs. It is about social capital, which football clubs bring in. The bottom point, which I have not made any point on at the moment, is about elite talent and the difficulty associated with elite talent being able to go to the top of the tree when they lose their local football club and local infrastructure.

The next slide is about economic development. Once again, I do not know that I need to particularly point out anything other than the ongoing issue associated with insurance. Then, in terms of the environment, there is water management and the affordability of water management. I will pick that up in the recommendations. There is also the impact on schools.

The last issues that I want to focus on for a minute are social welfare issues. I want to concentrate on the significance of football in terms of our social welfare development in country centres, particularly in the smaller centres. You may have seen the stats on suicide related to community connectedness. The slide shows the national stats. I refer to the bottom of that slide: 24 per cent of deaths were in the 20 to 29 age group and 29 per cent were in the 30 to 39 age. Half of the deaths were in the group of people who would normally be participating in a football community. The last point there is that male suicide rates have increased threefold.

When you look at that in terms of the impact on local country communities, 61 per cent were agricultural suicides; and 921 people were involved with farms suicides. That is a dreadful statistic, and I just think there is a significant

issue here for us. That graph on the next slide indicates that in rural and remote areas the male suicide rate is significantly higher than anywhere else in the community. That I believe is a critical point to note in terms of your deliberations. Why do we have suicides? The contributing factors are listed there for you, but think about it: loss of identity, social isolation, connectedness to the community — all related to the football club.

Then they say, 'How do we prevent suicide?'. The next slide shows: connectedness, social contact, role models, relationship building, feeling valued and participation. They are all directly related to our football community and the impact that football communities have particularly in the small, isolated areas of the state. So I think it is a critical issue that we need to look at.

I have put the next slide in just for your own information. The graph shows the AFL players transfer fees. You can see how much is received there. Mind you, I might add that half of that goes directly to Football Victoria and not to the country. I should mention to you that the VCFL gets \$225 000 on an annual basis at the moment — that is the agreement with Football Victoria — for the programs to run in the country areas. We made a decision — it must be 8 or 10 years back. I actually undertook an investigation of where the money was going. When we went through the research we found that only 100 clubs in Victoria were getting all the transfer fee money. So we decided we would pool the money. It is distributed on an equal basis. There has been a \$10 000 base, plus a per capita contribution. So somewhere like the Wimmera would get about \$16 000 or \$18 000 a year and north-central would get about \$12 000 or \$14 000 a year in total for their football development programs, based on that equalisation process.

I just wanted to make the point and you can see from this slide the number of players who were drafted from country Victoria. Over that particular period it was 46 per cent greater than the whole state of South Australia and 49 per cent greater than Western Australia.

The next slide emphasises that 28 per cent of players in the AFL are from Victorian country football regions — a quarter of the players are produced in country Victoria. The next slide shows what you probably wanted to hear from me — that is, recommendations. There are a number of things here that I feel quite passionately about. The first point is coaching accreditation. I am not sure whether you are aware that coaches are given 12 months after their appointment in which to get accreditation. So they can go out into a football club and start coaching on the spot — it does not matter what their background is. They are given 12 months before they have to complete a coaching accreditation course. I have to say some leagues have implemented a program where they have to have accreditation before they start — for instance, the Bendigo Junior Football League.

You may be aware you cannot start coaching over there unless you have received accreditation. I believe that this committee should recommend that coaching accreditation should take place before anybody starts coaching. Don't give them 12 months. Some of them can coach for 12 months, drop out of the system and not coach again — and the damage they have done during that period is immense. During the last 12 months I have visited various leagues. During last year I took notice of some absolutely disgraceful performances by coaches involving young people, particularly in the 15, 16 and 17 years age group. I believe this committee should recommend that there is accreditation before they start coaching and that there is a formal process of re-accreditation on a regular basis.

The second point is medical accreditation. I listened to one of the speakers earlier, one of the mums, talk about accidents and the like. I believe that a lot of the mums are concerned about the medical side of things on the football field: accidents, with the young ones getting hurt. I believe that we need to have some sort of formal medical accreditation process. In particular, make it compulsory that there is a properly qualified trainer with a level of certification which is adequate at every ground every week. I think that that would be something that would allay the fears of a number of the mothers in particular, but the whole community.

The next point is about good sports. I would like to focus there on umpiring. How can I put it? We have the white maggot syndrome, as you all know. Unfortunately that is a culture that has been built up over many years. There are certain attitudes, and I think at times we underestimate the significance and the importance of the umpire on the football field — that is, the way he conducts and umpires the game. He is also a coach and he facilitates a game, but at times we put anybody out there. We put people who have not got adequate training or the right skills, and people do not want to do it because they get abused every week. I think there needs to be some sort of formal program of developing a code of conduct and trying to change social attitudes regarding umpiring, and I know the VCFL is working on that. You will be aware that it has recently appointed some people in the area of umpire development, but a lot of work needs to be put into that area of the game.

There is also the issue of what I call a 'sustainable infrastructure fund'. I did not know what else to call it. Think about your own communities and the schools and football grounds that are in them. During the course of the week between 9.00 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. each day my football oval is used regularly for physical education and sport education. At the end of the day it sits there. It is not used after 3.30 p.m. each day, and often it is not used at the weekends. You go 1 kilometre down the road and you have a football club that uses the oval for two or three nights training and on Saturday afternoon, but it is left idle for the rest of the week. I believe we need to have what I have called 'connected government'. We need education, the municipality and the clubs to work together and focus on a single turf facility in a community so that both the school and the local community can use it in conjunction with each other and you get maximum usage out of the facility, and not at double the cost. Also we would not have the issue of water associated with using two ovals. I am sorry; I am probably taking up too much time.

We have tried to introduce junior match policy. Once again I believe this is an essential item in terms of the development of young people. The Geelong and Mornington areas, for instance, have had tremendous trouble introducing the junior match policy. There are two areas of concern. One is parent resistance; they do not understand the significance and importance of the modified rules, and they want to play real games for points and kick 30 goals while the opposition does not score. The other issue, which flows over to the metropolitan area, is that because the metropolitan clubs and leagues are not introducing the modified rules they are losing players in the country centres because the parents want to take them to real games. I know that Geelong and Mornington, for instance, are having great difficulty in introducing the policy because of the pressure that is coming from the metropolitan area. I think we need to do something about that. I will not concentrate on turf management for long, but you understand the water issues. There needs to be a coordinated awareness and education policy.

Then there are schools. I could talk for hours! You have seen in the papers in the last two days the issue about the gender imbalance in schools. I might add that I put this slide together some weeks ago. Some 85 per cent of primary school teachers are female. I have to say — and I am not here to take any political stance — that I am extremely disappointed that in the papers a political football is being kicked around on this issue. There should be a bipartisan approach to this issue. It is more than a football issue; it is a whole school and community issue. We all recognise that in general boys in schools are underperforming. The data is there, and it is conclusive. One of the issues certainly is male role models. A lot of these boys in particular go home to a household where there is no father — mum being the only person in the house. I have students in my school who have spent their whole primary education with female teachers. They have never once had a male teacher when they get to secondary school. I am not saying that the female teachers are not excellent, capable and dedicated teachers — they are! But you need role models in life. Boys learn differently to girls, and the curriculum needs to focus on that. Football is one of the areas that is suffering in that whole process, and we need to understand that. So we do need to encourage males into teaching. Maybe the suggestion from Brendan Nelson is not one that has been accepted, but we have to do something about encouraging males into the system.

I will make a final point about Sebastopol Secondary College. You may have heard of SEPEP — that is the sport education physical education program — where they involve the whole class in the development of a sporting club. There are coaches, managers, organisers, umpires et cetera. That is a particular model that I think the committee should have a look at. With insurance there has been an effort made to cut costs.

As far as role models are concerned, the AFL has something to answer for, I am extremely critical of it. I have got its enterprise bargaining agreement, and AFL clubs are required to provide players to country centres, but they do not do it. They do not meet their licence; they neglect us in the country. There are countless examples. I am sure there are people sitting behind me who will tell you that we have organised clinics, but they just do not come because the coach has called a training session. We need to get AFL players to come into the country. I know that something has been written into the new EBA, but we have to make sure that happens. It was written into the last EBA, but it did not happen. We need to make sure that it does.

Lastly, there is technology. If we want to be professional in the development of football we need to make sure that we are literate in terms of our technology capabilities. We need to have access to computers, notebooks et cetera at a reasonable rate. We need satisfactory utility charges through the telecommunications system and we need a reliable service. There are a number of country areas that will tell you — and once again I am not trying to be political here; it is just the honest truth — where they are not getting the correct access and they cannot link up through the computer system. That impacts on their professionalism and their ability to organise clubs. That is the

end. I am sorry; I have probably taken up too much time, but I do appreciate the opportunity to present to you. Thank you very much.

Mr McQUILTEN — That was excellent!

The CHAIR — Thank you, Brendan.

Mr INGRAM — Brendan, we do not have that last page.

Mr RYAN — I will run it off and give it to you. Sorry, that is obviously an afterthought.

Mr CRUTCHFIELD — It is a great relief that you had a crack at the AFL, because I thought it was a glaring omission. That has been a theme that has pervaded, I think, all — but not every — speakers; it has certainly been a theme that there have been some concerns about the AFL. First of all, on your comments about equalisation, I came from South Warrnambool Football Club when I went to Fitzroy. They obviously received a number of dollars. I do not think South Warrnambool is necessarily one of the clubs that needs all the money from elite players, if I can use that term, and the equalisation fund is in fact for sides like Harrow-Balmoral or Gerang-Kiata — the clubs that need the money. I agree strongly with the fact that —

I do not care how strong your club is, the money still needs to come back via the VCFL, but it needs to go to district clubs, not major league clubs. Major league clubs have significant influence in that they can poach the junior kids anyway to the major league clubs. I am sure it happens around here.

Mr RYAN — Yes, it does.

Mr CRUTCHFIELD — Then they will claim that is their player and they get all the money. I am glad to support that issue. In respect of the AFL, one view is that the perception is that its funding is dominated by elite development squads — that is, the under-15s, under-16s and the under-18 competitions, and the VFL. Some presenters have said that they see no discernible difference the AFL makes in a program side, in a dollar side, or in a capital side. What are your comments with respect to that?

Mr RYAN — I think statewide the feedback would be a major concern about whether the AFL funds get down to grassroots level. There is no doubt about that. For instance, at the under-18 competition the development officers are required to make a strong commitment. I am not trying in any way to criticise that program because that is where the elite players go to. A good example there is that the development officers spend their Saturdays driving all over the countryside with the elite team. They are looking after them — and I know they need to be looked after — but they are not available on Saturdays at the local clubs. I know that the development officers would like to be able to do that, but because of the commitment in that area they realise that they need to support those programs. A lot of the local clubs would tell you that they want to see these development people at the grassroots footy and involved at that level, rather than always having these commitments at the more elite level. We believe there has been a change in direction as far as AFL funding is concerned in terms of Victoria. There is a lot of money going into the development states, Queensland and New South Wales — and I can understand that. In some cases we think it is almost obscene, the change in the direction. Surely your first priority is your heartland?

Mr CRUTCHFIELD — Are you saying it is reduced? Is that the change of direction?

Mr RYAN — It is reduced in Victoria. In terms of the percentage of funds that come to Victoria, there is more money going to New South Wales and Queensland for development. I can see that that is a priority there, but we must maintain what we have got here in Victoria.

Can I just raise something I did not touch on, the AFL telecasts? At the moment we have some embargo on Saturday afternoons with the telecasts of football into the country. Once again, if this committee has an influence, that needs to remain, if we can keep it that way. We have pay TV, and people with pay TV can watch that, but they are not the main games; they are the third-rated games, or whatever. We need to make sure that we do not have direct telecasts. A good example is preliminary final day in the AFL. They are now telecasting preliminary final day directly into the country on free-to-air TV. A number of the leagues try to conduct their grand finals that weekend. Now they have given up, in many instances, because they have realised that it just destroys the game on that weekend. Often the revenue that is raised from the grand final is the most significant fundraiser for the year for

the league, to keep the league buoyant. So there are a number of issues, Michael, I think you are right, concerning the AFL that we need to make sure we keep in perspective.

Mr MITCHELL — We have had a couple of people talk to us about the elite development program, where they take young kids, 16-year-olds, and give them the, 'You're going to be a star' type of thing and then they are dropped off the list, for whatever reason, and then they are left with nothing. How do you fit in with that and have you done any research or anything on how to bring these kids back, so that they can go back to their local teams and not feel too rejected from being dropped?

Mr RYAN — It is a difficult issue. I think Geoff Burdett might be sitting behind me. He is involved with those sorts of programs. He will have a large squad of boys at the moment training for the elite squad and then they will cut the squad back to 40 boys, or whatever, and there will be a significant number that miss out. For them they believe that is the end of their career. They do not want to go on with football; they do not believe they have anything in football for them. So I think we need to look at an education program in terms of managing those young people and making sure that the expectations are quite clear, that we have additional opportunities for them to come back into the system, that they are not finished when they are 16 years of age — or 17 or 18 years of age — that there are other opportunities where they can still get into the elite squad. I am not sure that I have an absolute answer for you as to what is the best thing to do. But I think unrealistic expectations are a key here and I think if we can modify those and get the families to better understand what the expectations are and the directions that could be taken and the alternative pathways, then maybe we could overcome some of those problems. I will be honest with you, I have not got an absolute answer there.

Mr WALSH — Brendan, you did not mention much about player payments in country football. You spent quite a bit of time on where government — local government, or whatever — could assist with grounds and all that sort of stuff. How do we make sure that that is done and that it is not just channelled into extra payments for players for those clubs that are fortunate enough to get it?

Mr RYAN — It is a major issue. I cannot recall now whether it was last year or the year before, but we looked at the player payments through the salary cap. I think the declared payments in the country was \$15.3 million across the system, which is a lot of money, is it not?

Mr WALSH — Is that the real payments?

Mr RYAN — No, that is what I am saying, that is the declared payments — and obviously it is far greater than that. We have on a couple of occasions tried to strongly police that salary cap. On two significant occasions we have been burnt to a cinder because every single member of the club and every player, when they have been interviewed, stuck to a story and even went to stat decs and the like and we could not break them. We have tried on a few occasions. I have looked at a couple of clubs. I am not going to name anybody, but they are running cooperatives. There was a club that was running a company. There are a number of ventures outside the actual football club. A good one, of course, is having the sporting or social club, which is not the football club, actually making the payments, and, of course, the traditional one is the money in the boot after they come off the ground. All of those particular avenues make it extremely difficult for us to police the salary cap. Some of these clubs are going to force other clubs out of existence if we do not somehow bring this under control.

Mr WALSH — I am supportive, but what I am saying is that if, as some of the recommendations, we do things that help clubs financially, how do we know that it does not just jack up the prices that they pay for players?

Mr RYAN — I think the salary cap issue needs to be policed and we need to try and find ways in which we can make sure that their expenditure is kept within limits. Let me say that I think we possibly have made a mistake of having a blanket system across the state, where major leagues are \$50 000 plus a coach and player, and the district leagues are \$30 000, including a coach and player. I think there are areas of the state where they can afford larger sums than those and there are areas of the state that can afford less. Up in the north-east for countless years they have put in submissions to have a higher salary cap because of the concern across the border and the impact that it could have on the league up there. So it is an issue and it is not an easy one to resolve, I have to admit that.

Mr CRUTCHFIELD — I think if you got the ATO onto individual players, which maybe we could recommend, and there are a number of audits going on around the VCFL, I think you would find a people will be frightened.

Mr RYAN — Yes.

The CHAIR — Brendan, thank you. I know that you are very passionate about this and could talk for a lot longer. There is a lot of other people here who are very busy as well. Thanks very much for all your effort.

Mr RYAN — Thanks for the opportunity. I appreciate it.

The CHAIR — You will get a copy of the transcript, so you can correct matters of fact or grammar.

Witness withdrew.