



44 Avenue Road  
Mosman NSW  
Australia 2088

T : 61 2 8968 7100  
F : 61 2 9969 3520  
W : [freetvaust.com.au](http://freetvaust.com.au)

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **AUSTRALIAN VIEWERS WANT TO KEEP SPORT FREE**

Australian television viewers have responded in record numbers to the Save My Sport campaign designed to ensure that Australians are able to continue to see major sporting events for free.

Free TV Australia chief executive, Julie Flynn, said, "Viewers are desperate to save their favourite sports from moving exclusively to pay TV, inundating Members of Parliament with phone calls and emails in support of the anti-siphoning rules."

Almost 50,000 people have responded to the Save My Sport online poll asking whether or not people want to pay for sports coverage on television.

An overwhelming 94 per cent – more than 46,800 respondents - do not want to pay for major sporting events they currently see for free on television.

More than 18,000 people have signed a petition backing the Save My Sport campaign.

Pay TV interests and some big sporting bodies are waging war on the anti-siphoning list, hoping to make more sport available exclusively by subscription.

The Save My Sport campaign aims to ensure the new 'use it or lose it' rules starting on 1 January next year do not result in viewers having to pay for sports coverage they currently see for free.

Free TV supports a 'use it or lose it' scheme, provided that it does not actually result in less free sport being available to viewers. To do this, any scheme must consider the impact of delisting events on viewers. It should also look at the rights broadcasters actually acquire, and whether unused events were available to, or purchased by, pay television.

"Pay TV is trying to manipulate this process to have events delisted unnecessarily," Ms Flynn said.

"For example, they've called for a rule requiring all sports to be shown nationally. This is a tricky way of getting sports like the AFL delisted because free-to-air broadcasters show home games in local markets, rather than one game nationally."

"It's vital that events that are already being covered not be removed from the list. The 'use it or lose it' mechanism should not result in free coverage being replaced by paid coverage.

"The pay TV industry is on a mission to slash the antisiphoning list. It's time to call their bluff. Instead of making spurious claims about what FTA broadcasters do or do not show, the pay TV industry needs to come clean with viewers and tell them what events they think viewers should be forced to pay for.

"Pay TV claims it will be good for viewers to take events off the list even though this will result in exclusive pay television coverage. So why are they so afraid of telling people which events they should have to pay to watch?"

"In the last few months pay TV has criticised coverage of the AFL and NRL Finals, the Bledisloe Cup, the Winter Olympics, the Commonwealth Games and Wimbledon. Do they really think viewers would be better off if the current extensive free coverage of these events was to disappear and viewers could only watch these sports on pay TV?"

The results from the Save My Sport poll make it clear that viewers don't want to pay for sports they currently see for free.

Australia's free-to-air broadcasters use the sporting rights they acquire and everything else is available to pay TV.

"The strong viewer support for the Save My Sport campaign highlights the value Australian viewers place on being able to see major sporting events for free on television," said Ms Flynn.

**For media inquiries, please contact Free TV Australia on (02) 8968 7100.**